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## DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS

*HC Deb 15 September 1948 vol 456 cc75-215*

*[SECOND DAY]*

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [14th September]: "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, as follows:" "Most Gracious Sovereign," "We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."—[Mr. Leslie.]"*

*Question again proposed.*

*2.43 p.m.*

Mr. Eden (Warwick and Leamington) May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, before we begin the Debate, whether you can give us guidance as to any Amendments which you may propose to call?

Mr. Speaker I have looked through the four Amendments on the Order Paper, and I think that it would be quite reasonable to call the Amendment in the name of the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) tomorrow, and to allow the Debate to proceed on that Amendment, which is very wide in its terms, until Friday, when the Address will no doubt be voted.

Mr. Eden Since the House adjourned at the end of July there has been, as I fear everyone will be compelled to agree, a marked deterioration in the international situation. Relations between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies have become more tense; incidents in Berlin, some of which seemed deliberately provocative, have been multiplied, and the outlook in general is one which must be profoundly disturbing to all men of good will. We know so well that a war-shattered world today yearns for peace, and yet, as the months go by, peace seems ever more constantly to elude us. Perhaps the most disturbing factor of the whole of the present situation is that standards of international good faith seem to be falling everywhere. There is open and cynical disregard for all international obligations, and the growth of this tendency is a menace to peace.

The Foreign Secretary has told us that he wishes to postpone his statement on the German situation and the discussions in Moscow and Berlin until next week. We, of course, accept that, and I do not myself propose to refer any further to that situation today. I would only add that if any further evidence were needed of the gravity of the international situation, it could be found in the statement which the Lord President of the Council made to the House at the conclusion of his speech yesterday. On that matter—the defence proposals of the Government—we shall agree to have a Debate next week, and I therefore pass at once to the storm centres in India and in the Far East.

Uppermost in my mind and in the minds of most of us today, I have no doubt, is the situation in Hyderabad. It is certainly true that discussions have been going on for some time past between the Dominion of India and the Nizam. I am not for the moment concerned as to where the major blame may be said to lie for the breakdown of the actual negotiations; but it is a fact that the relations of Hyderabad with the Dominion of India have been governed since the end of November last year by what is known as the Standstill Agreement. It is by founding itself on that agreement

that the Dominion of India, as I understand it, has for some months past sought to reject Hyderabad's appeal that her case should be heard at U.N.O.

The terms of this agreement, which was signed by the Nizam and the then Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, are absolutely specific, and I must read one of its articles to the House. It reads as follows: "Until new agreements in this behalf are made, all agreements and administrative arrangements as to the matters of common concern, including External Affairs, Defence and Communications which were existing between the Crown and the Nizam immediately before the 15th August, 1947, shall, in so far as may be appropriate, continue as between the Dominion of India (or any part thereof) and the Nizam." Then follows this passage: "Nothing herein contained shall impose any obligation or confer any right on the Dominion: (1) to send troops to assist the Nizam in the maintenance of internal order; (ii) to station troops in Hyderabad territory except in time of war and with the consent of the Nizam which will not be unreasonably withheld, any troops so stationed to be withdrawn from Hyderabad territory within six months of the termination of hostilities." I quote that to show that it is beyond dispute that the Dominion of India, by invading Hyderabad, has committed a flagrant and inexcusable breach of their own agreement with Hyderabad. That seems to me to be inescapable. It is very painful for anyone in this House to have to say these things about the Government of one of His Majesty's Dominions, but I must remind the Government that when my right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford raised this matter some six weeks ago, the Prime Minister—we are all very sorry for the reason why he cannot be here today—chided my right hon. Friend for not referring to this Standstill Agreement. Yet it is this agreement which the Indian Government have now torn up. Whatever the rights or wrongs may have been in the earlier stages of this dispute, about which I have no desire to be dogmatic, it seems impossible for us to come to any other conclusion than that the invasion of Hyderabad by the Armies and Air Forces of the Dominion of India is, in fact, an act of aggression.

Now as to our own painful responsibility in this matter. Many of my right hon. and hon. Friends on this side of the House have several times expressed their anxiety about the position of the States once the Indian Independence Act came into force. We pressed the Government for some more specific information on this subject, and eventually, while the Bill was being debated in another place, a very categorical assurance was given by the then Secretary of State for India, in terms which I must quote. He said: "We are therefore proposing that from the date when the new Dominions are set up the treaties and agreements which gave us suzerainty over the States will become void. From that moment the appointments and functions of the Crown representative and his officers will terminate and the States will be the masters of their own fate." He added: "They will then be entirely free to choose whether to associate with one or other of the Dominion Governments or to stand alone, and His Majesty's Government will not use the slightest pressure to influence their momentous and voluntary decision." Words could not be more specific than that. I quote this because it does make it abundantly clear that in the view of His Majesty's Government, as their Secretary of State for India said at that time, the Government of the Nizam, if it so wished, was perfectly entitled to seek an independent existence as an independent State. I think that was also the view of the Prime Minister, because in the Debate to which I have just referred, which took place just before the Adjournment, he said in reference to Hyderabad: "I agree it is an independent State."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 30th July, 1948; Vol. 454, c. 1744.]—though the Prime Minister went on to point out that independence was qualified by the standstill agreement, which standstill agreement I submit has now been entirely torn up by the invasion of Hyderabad. This certainly also seemed to be the view of the Government of India, if I rightly understand what the Indian representative said at the Security Council in January of this year, which was: "When the Indian Independence Act came into force Jammu and Kashmir, like other States, became free to decide whether she would accede to the one or the other of the two Dominions, or remain independent." I quote all this, not because I want to comment on the merits of the behaviour of one or other of the parties to these particular negotiations, but because it is surely clear that neither His Majesty's Government nor the Government of India could possibly accept that there can be any justification, in the circumstances I have detailed to the House, for a resort to force. The danger of this situation, I ask the Government to consider, is not really limited to what is unhappily

happening now between Hyderabad and India. That is not the whole danger, because unless this deplorable situation can by some means or another be brought to an end, it may well lead, I fear, to a renewal of that communal strife which shocked the world a little over a year ago.

In the light of these circumstances, and of the fighting which is now taking place in Hyderabad, what should our action be? I have no doubt in my mind as to what our policy should be. We should do everything in our power to invoke the assistance of the United Nations. I must remind the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary, who is to reply, that this, after all, is precisely what my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition asked for six weeks ago. The intervention of the United Nations ought to be sought at the earliest possible moment; and it ought to be sought, not merely to prevent the casualties which are unhappily taking place today in the fighting, but even more to check a conflagration which, if it is not checked, may well spread far beyond the borders of Hyderabad.

We know, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, that under Article 35 (2) of the Charter, any nation can take a dispute to the Assembly or the Security Council, whether it be a member or not. I have seen a report in the Press this morning that a special meeting of the United Nations' Security Council is to be held tomorrow in Paris to consider the invasion of Hyderabad. I hope very much that the Foreign Secretary will be able to confirm to us today that this report is correct and to assure us that His Majesty's Government will do everything in their power to ensure that this situation is discussed and handled immediately by the Security Council.

I believe that if this is done a valuable service can be performed by the Security Council. It could offer certain things. It could offer its immediate good offices to bring about a cessation of hostilities. It could do more than that. It could also offer to make the necessary arrangements for a plebiscite to be held. The Government of India have asked for a plebiscite; the Nizam himself has, I think I am right in saying, also accepted the principle of a plebiscite. Very well then; it ought to be possible for a United Nations' Commission to meet both these sets of difficulties. Here, as it seems to me, is an instance where, if U.N.O. acts, and acts quickly, and with full authority, it will not only add considerably to its own reputation, but perhaps will save a vast area of the world's surface from untold suffering and human misery.

I turn from that to another part of the world where the outlook is also far from cheerful, and that is Burma. I must remind the Government that what the then Secretary of State for Burma termed "the priceless gift of full independence" for Burma has, most unhappily, led to what my noble friend the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton) more gloomily, but perhaps more accurately, predicted, namely, armed struggle for power, financial difficulties and revolts by minorities. Each one of those forebodings has, unhappily, been fulfilled. The armed struggle is between the Government and a section of the Communists; there are financial difficulties with a deficit of some £7 million on a total revenue of about £50 million; and there are revolts by minorities in the movement by the Karens for an independent State. These are deplorable happenings.

I do not want to say anything which might embarrass the Government of Burma in their struggle against the Communists. So far as that goes, I know which side I am on. We fully support them in this. I cannot, however, refrain from saying that the Karen movement for a greater measure of independence seems to justify some of the warnings uttered by my hon. Friends who could not accept the Panglong Agreement at its face value, and who said so very emphatically while the Burma Independence Act was being discussed. It seems very clear that if the Karens had really had that square deal about which we then heard so much they would not have expressed their dissatisfaction in the very open way they are now doing. Apart from that, and apart from all the misery and bloodshed with which practically the whole of Burma is engulfed, there is also the fact that external trade is suffering. The production of rice, urgently needed elsewhere, is falling off, which will add still further to the problem of the Minister of Food.

As regards British interests in Burma—which I suppose one is allowed to mention in this country—the outlook is indeed a very unhappy one, and, whether or not some measure of compensation is paid, the fact remains that our interests in Burma—and I noticed the other day in a leading United States paper that our companies and our interests

there are estimated as being worth about 400 million dollars, and the earnings of these companies in the past have benefited both Burma and this country—are bound to be affected by events now taking place in that country. I would say to the Government that, strongly as we support their endeavours in the export drive, it will not be very easy to find an increase in exports which will make up for the loss of production and revenue which might have accrued from the prosperity of those companies in Burma if that unhappy country had been at peace.

I turn to Malaya. Here we are faced, not with terrorist gangs, as we occasionally read in the newspapers. I do not think that is an accurate description. What we are faced with is a determined Communist attempt to seize power, an attempt which is integrated with the Communist insurrection in Burma, and with Communist activities across the border in Siam. It is all of a pattern, as I do not think the Foreign Secretary would deny, and has as its objective the overthrow of law and order throughout South-Eastern Asia—which Lenin I think once called the backdoor of the capitalist and imperialist Powers—and, as a result, the complete disruption of the economy of that area. Unless this Communist attempt is successfully met and overcome at an early date, the whole security of these vast areas will be jeopardised. In addition, I might refer to the relatively sordid financial matter, namely, our dollar-earning capacity. The former Chancellor of the Exchequer is here, and he will agree with these figures. In 1947, the exports from Malaya to the United States totalled 284 million dollars. That figure must be put against the total exports from this country to the United States, which were 240 million dollars. In other words, the Malayan exports exceeded the total exports of this country to the United States. The House will see therefore how desperately serious is this issue to us all.

For our part, we shall give unqualified support to the Government in all steps that may be necessary to quell this rebellion; but we are concerned to know whether everything that is required is being supplied both in men and in material. I have to ask the Government this, because the Secretary of State for the Colonies will remember he told us just before the House rose that there was nothing which had been asked for that had not been sent. And yet it has been necessary since to send these comparatively large military reinforcements, including a Guards brigade and the Fourth Hussars. Therefore, we must ask the Government whether they and the local authorities even yet are seized of the seriousness of this situation. Why did they not send these reinforcements at an earlier date? Was it because they were over-optimistic as to the outcome?

Another point which gives rise to anxiety is the apparent inadequacy of our intelligence and information services in Malaya. Again, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the same speech to which I have referred, said—and I am not sure whether he was referring to Malaya only or to the Colonies in general—that he was very concerned about these matters. Since he made that statement, I have seen a report of a speech by one of the European unofficial members of the Malayan Legislature—a very respected member as the right hon. Gentleman well knows—who implied that the writing on the wall had been patent to the unofficial community in Malaya long since, but that warnings by them to the Government had passed unheeded. Is that true? If that statement is correct and these warnings were given and were unheeded, it reveals a very serious state of affairs.

I confess that I am still very deeply concerned over the whole of the Malayan situation, and I earnestly warn the Government even now against undue optimism about it, or against believing that the reinforcements they have sent will necessarily end the matter. I have an idea that it may take much longer than some people think to restore the rule of law; and it is only when we have sent sufficient men trained in jungle warfare and when the fullest use is made of local resources, including the knowledge of the planters, that we shall see any real progress towards ordered and peaceful conditions. In any case, we shall be glad of any information the Government can give us about this most anxious state of affairs.

I come now to matters closer at home about which the Foreign Secretary is concerned. I do not propose to refer to the Berlin situation, but there is another aspect of our European policy upon which I want to say something. I am sure that there is no doubt that in wide areas in this country, and indeed of Western Europe, there is a keen desire to make.

progress with Western Union. How wide that Western Union should ultimately be spread and the countries it should include is a matter which no doubt can be profitably discussed. My right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford made certain proposals to the Prime Minister, as the outcome of the Hague Congress, that the five Brussels Powers should meet to consider calling an assembly of Western European nations. This proposal, incidentally, has since been supported by both the French and the Belgian Governments, but not by the "Tribune." The Prime Minister turned it down, and he turned it down for reasons that I must confess did not seem to me to be altogether convincing. I want to say this to the Foreign Secretary today. If he says the Government do not like this particular plan, then what other proposals have they in mind so that further and more rapid progress can be made in creating unity between the Western Powers?

After all, what is it we all want? I feel that there is no dispute about this, and no particular plot to create a capitalistic or socialistic Europe. I am absolutely certain that the essential need of the world today is that the major forces should not largely reside in either one or two Powers with gigantic resources, the United States and the Soviet Union. That is a fundamentally dangerous position for the world. I am equally sure that we can only make our weight felt in the scales if we are speaking collectively for the British Commonwealth and together with the free nations of Western Europe. That is what I want to see. What methods the Foreign Secretary adopts are for him to decide, but we want to feel that this is also what the Government want and to know what methods they propose to follow to achieve it. We have our own special contribution to make. We can do that best if we do it together with the British Commonwealth and the other Western nations.

The Prime Minister told us the other day, and he said it in his letter to my right hon. Friend, how important it was to carry the British Commonwealth with us on this issue. We are, of course, all agreed about that, and there is no kind of dispute about it. I have said over and over again that there cannot be any progress in the creation of closer relations between us and the other nations of Western Europe except in association and in full accord with our overseas partners in the Empire.

We must at all costs move in step, but so far as we can judge who have no access to Government information, there is wide support among statesmen of all parties in the Empire for closer Western European unity. I have seen speeches by statesmen in Canada, Australia and South Africa, including Dr. Malan, which have all been in this sense. I saw the other day that the Governor-General of New Zealand said he was in favour of it, too. This does not seem to me to be surprising. On the contrary, it would be surprising if the Dominions took the other view. For what has happened twice in our generation? European conflicts have twice arisen which have involved our partners overseas in war, and the price they have paid in human life and treasure in both these conflicts is not only beyond praise but beyond any expression of gratitude this House can frame.

Surely all this goes to show that their interest is as close as ours in ensuring that there is no repetition of these events. They must surely feel that the surest safeguard against a renewal of these conflicts can only be built on the unity and strength of the free nations of Western Europe. I submit that this matter is very urgent, and I hope that the Foreign Secretary will be able to give us, either today or next week, an account of his future intentions in this respect. There is no doubt in my mind that the nations of Western Europe are ready to respond to a lead from us on this issue.

Admittedly, in France today there is a political situation which is not as stable as we should like to see it, although even that may be deceptive. I remember on one occasion the chairman of an international conference mildly rebuking the French Foreign Secretary of the day because there had been so many changes in the French government during our proceedings, to which the French representative replied: "Well, Mr. President, you can have it as you like. Which would you rather have; seven different Governments with one policy, or one Government with seven different policies?" I suggest to the House that even in these kaleidoscopic changes of Governments in France there may run a thread of unity in policy, as is sometimes embarrassingly said exists also in our own country. I ask the right hon.

Gentleman to give us a report on that. I say that despite the record of instability of these political conditions, the closer we can bring about the integration of relations between the Western Powers, the greater will be the sense of confidence and consequent stability of each of those countries—at least, so I believe.

There is another matter to which I must refer briefly, because I know it is in the public mind, and that is the announcement, which we read during the Recess, about the impending trial of four German military commanders. I must say at once that I have no information nor, I suppose, have any other Members, except Ministers, as to the evidence on which charges against these men may be based. But it is a fact from which we cannot escape that all these men have been in captivity in this country for three and a half years. During that time, so far as I know, no charge was formulated against them, and it even appears that they returned to their own country without knowing that they were to be subject to trial when they got there.

I am sure that the whole House feels—at least, I certainly feel—that it is wholly repugnant to British traditions that after so long a period of imprisonment charges should so belatedly have been brought against these men. It is hard to believe that whatever evidence there is was not available quite a while ago. If it was available, what has been the cause of all this delay? If the evidence did justify trial—and it might have done—why were the generals not brought to trial a long time ago? The present position, on the information which the public has, is, without doubt, one which is in the highest degree distasteful. I hope that the Foreign Secretary, or the Secretary of State for War, if he is in charge, will, as soon as possible, give us some information on this subject.

Before I close I must make some reference to economic matters, because here is a situation which must cause us very grave concern. In fairness it must be said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made that clear enough, but despite the brilliant achievements of many of our export industries, for which great credit is due to managers and workers alike, the gap in our balance of payments is still formidable. The fact is that without substantial help from the United States we should now be suffering catastrophic shortages of food and raw materials, widespread unemployment, and increased sacrifices for all sections of our people. The Minister of Health, with whom I do not always find myself in agreement, was frank enough at Scarborough about the situation. He is reported to have said that without Marshall Aid, unemployment in this country would at once rise to 1½ million. I think that statement is correct. It is a conservative estimate—

Mr. Gallacher (Fife, West) It is not correct.

Mr. Eden Whether it is correct or not, it was made by one of His Majesty's Ministers, and I rather wish that the Lord President of the Council had had it in mind when he so complacently referred to how well everything was going under His Majesty's present advisers, because he might have paid a tribute to the quarter from which the aid came which enabled him to beam so happily on the Seconder of the Address yesterday.

So far as I can calculate the full amount of Marshall Aid which has been allocated to this country this year—supposing we get it in full, with no deductions—would be about enough to cover the gap in our balance of payments. But we have accepted very serious obligations to the other participating countries, particularly to France. It is no doubt true that we have to carry our share of the burden of the European Recovery Programme. It is a European plan. That was the form in which it was born, and that is the only form in which it will continue to receive American support. We cannot refuse to bear the burdens of assistance to other European countries that have been laid upon us, but we have to note how heavy they are and what is the result.

Altogether, the money we are committed to provide, whether as part of the payment scheme or by the release of sterling balances, will absorb about one-third of the Marshall Aid which we are to receive this year. Broadly speaking, we are to get £300 million from Marshall Aid, and have to pay out £100 million ourselves. If that is right that means that in the first year of Marshall Aid the help we are receiving will not be enough to meet our deficit. Marshall Aid can

last, at the most, for four years, and there is no guarantee that it will go on beyond next spring. Whenever it ends we must be in a position to stand on our own feet, and everyone wishes that to be sooner rather than later.

In addition to the gap in our balance of payments we have something else, following on what the Lord President said yesterday. We have the added commitments of the defence and rearmament proposals which the Government are now proposing. I cannot challenge those proposals on the ground that they are excessive. Indeed, I have the feeling that the Government were wrong nearly two years ago to give way to the pressure from their own side. Is there anybody in the House who will get up and say that we have reached the limit now, in the light of the present international situation, of what we may be called upon to find in the light of present international strains and stresses? We have to allow for further burdens there. Even the present proposals must add to our difficulty in filling the gap in our balance of payments. Faced with such a formidable difficulty, we must all realise that only a really united national effort will enable us to win through. Even the good export figures do not give us any excuse for complacency. If the ship founders, it is not much consolation to know that it had the best possible excuse for sinking—crew and passengers die just the same.

In these conditions I should have thought that His Majesty's Government would have done everything in their power to maintain the unity of the nation in this difficult period. Yet here we are, assembled together for a special Session, not to discuss the wide variety of our international problems, not to do what we can to point to the seriousness of the economic situation and propose some constructive remedies, but to pass a Bill the sole purpose of which, despite what the Lord President said yesterday, is to pave the way for the nationalisation of one of the most brilliantly successful of our free enterprise industries.

What has been happening? Surely the right hon. Gentleman has looked carefully at the figures. Month by month the iron and steel industry maintains its record breaking output. Output per man has increased by 28 per cent. since 1938; weekly earnings have risen by 107 per cent. and the cost of material by 80 per cent., yet prices by only 69 per cent. When all allowances are made, it is a pretty remarkable record. This is the industry, which has had no industrial dispute for generations and which can claim that since before the war it has increased output, increased productivity, increased wages and reduced prices. How many other industries in the country can improve on that record? Never has Government action been so utterly out of scale with the reality of our national problem.

Mr. David Jones (The Hartlepoons) What about the inter-war years?

Mr. Eden The war years? It did magnificently. The iron and steel industry did very well during the war years.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bevin) No.

Mr. Eden The right hon. Gentleman says that it did not, and no doubt he can explain it. The Lord President of the Council told us yesterday that it was moonshine—I think the word he used was "moonshine"—to suppose that we were called back to discuss this Bill because it was in any way related to the nationalisation of iron and steel. I must say I thought that was a pretty good one.

The Lord President of the Council (Mr. Herbert Morrison) Is the right hon. Gentleman in a position to speak with authority on this matter? This was a Measure announced in "Let us Face the Future." Is the right hon. Gentleman now saying that notwithstanding that, he already has information that that Bill, if introduced, is to be rejected by another place? Is that what he is telling us?

Mr. Eden I do not know why the right hon. Gentleman is so indignant about it. He told us that it was moonshine to connect this Bill in any way with the nationalisation of iron and steel. If he believes that, I am very sorry to tell him that he has not convinced us, nor do I believe he has convinced the country, of anything of the kind. If he wants any

enlightenment on the subject he should read the leading article in this morning's "Manchester Guardian." That is comparatively neutral ground on this issue. Nothing that the right hon. Gentleman and the Government have done in their administration has been so completely out of place in relation to our present problems as is this Session. It is impossible to imagine an action of more utterly grotesque irrelevance, and for their failure to place first things first the nation will certainly utterly condemn His Majesty's present advisers.

3.23 p.m.

*The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bevin)* As an old industrialist who lived in these trades for a good many years and, took part in their between-the-war troubles, I almost wish I could disregard foreign policy this afternoon and answer the right hon. Gentleman on the latter point. I should have a wide field there I can assure him. [HON. MEMBERS: "Go on."] Before I had finished with the subject of steel some hon. Gentlemen opposite would feel a little ashamed of themselves for all that they failed to do from 1931 to 1939. I could trace home very closely the difficulty of the balance of payments to that horrible neglect after tariffs were adopted in 1931 and before the development of the industry in 1939. However, I have to deal with foreign policy, which is a less controversial subject.

The first point raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) was the question of Hyderabad. I can assure him that I do not want to burke the issue at all, but I find myself in a difficulty this afternoon which prevents me from going into a great deal of detail on this question. As the right hon. Gentleman said, the matter has been referred to the Security Council, and the Security Council is meeting with great speed. In fact, it meets tomorrow. The representative of Great Britain happens to be the Chairman for this coming month, and the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate how difficult it is for me, with him in that position, to go into a great deal of detail now. I have taken the view as regards the Security Council that the setting down of definite, precise and conclusive instructions is a mistake, because in all the cases we have had I have felt that we ought to encourage the Security Council to hear the cases and to develop a judicial attitude. I admit that that has not always been done, but at least that has been our policy. When the facts and the circumstances are produced, we can in this way come to a conclusion as to the right policy to follow in a particular case. I hope, with the consent of the House, to follow that procedure now.

There are two factors in this case, and they are ones which the right hon. Gentleman will appreciate. One is what I might describe as the question of legal rights under the Charter. This has to be argued in the first instance; and I do not pretend to know at the moment what is the exact position of Hyderabad in the terms of its right to be heard or to bring a case before the Security Council. That does not mean that I am not anxious for it to come before the Security Council, but I cannot prejudge that argument until it takes place tomorrow. It may be that it will be decided that Hyderabad, within the meaning of the Charter, is a State. The right hon. Gentleman has raised the question of the Standstill Agreement and the end of Paramountcy, as well as several other questions. All that has been argued out to me by the lawyers in the Foreign Office, whom he knows very well, and there are different views.

Secondly, is it a situation which is covered by another Article of the Charter under which it might be taken? Whatever the decision, in so far as the Charter allows these cases to be brought before the international tribunal, I am in favour of such cases being brought. On the other hand, in regard to the question whether Hyderabad is or is not a State, I have always to keep in mind other considerations and in particular how such a situation as this might, even within this Empire, create a precedent for bringing a case by right before the Security Council even where we were opposed to it. Therefore, I would ask the House—[Interruption.] I am thinking of the territories overseas and also of the claims that might be made by other people, of which the House is well aware. Because of these considerations I cannot allow my feelings to dominate the situation. I have to have regard to the actual facts and circumstances when a decision is to be taken.



Therefore, I do not propose to say any more about Hyderabad at the moment, except that I regret, as everybody must regret, that this warlike spirit has developed in these new Dominions. [Interruption.] I say it is regrettable. Believe me, it is not limited to them. When a match like that is lighted anywhere in the world one does not know how far the effects of this will reach. It is not a question of high feeling. Never was there a time when one had to exercise greater care than now, lest one should find oneself landed into another world struggle. Therefore, I ask the House to allow the matter to go to the Security Council. The probability is that after discussion has taken place there and the matter has been analysed so that the true position can be established one way or the other, I shall be in a position to deal with it more fully in the Debate that is to take place next week.

It is not a question of whether the State still exists. Does it still exist within the meaning of the Charter? That is what we have to decide. If there were a dozen of us in a room with the Charter in front of us, and particularly if we were lawyers, I do not know which side any of us would be on. The arguments are very evenly divided. I feel, however, that there are clauses under the Charter bearing on this problem in relation to which ventilation of the matter at the United Nations may lead to a solution, as has happened in other cases.

Burma has been mentioned. The independence of Burma has been granted, but I do not agree that the granting of independence in Burma is a cause of the outbreak which is at present going on there, any more than it is a cause of the trouble in Malaya. The right hon. Gentleman was nearer to accuracy when he said that throughout the whole of South-East Asia there is a Cominform and Communist plan to eliminate from that territory every Western association of trade and of everything else. It is a situation which we have to meet.

*Mr. Walter Fletcher (Bury)* Discussion has been going on for a year.

*Mr. Bevin* It is all very well for the hon. Gentleman to say that we have discussed it for a year. I would remind him that this problem has been in existence ever since the Marxist-Leninist theory was adopted. It has existed not only in Malaya but elsewhere. It is part and parcel of a clash between two philosophies and it will keep on breaking out everywhere it can, not merely in Malaya and Burma and India, but elsewhere.

*Mr. Gallacher* It is between Socialism and Capitalism.

*Mr. Bevin* No, Sir. I am sure that all of us were thrilled today when we heard that the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) was calling a great demonstration for Sunday in Trafalgar Square to protest against the 25-year sentences on his fellow working men in Berlin this week.

*Mr. Gallacher* Nonsense.

*Mr. Bevin* In regard to this outbreak in Burma, is it suggested that we should have remained there and should have had to pour thousands of troops into that country as well? I should like to know what is in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman. That is what is involved. At present my sympathy, and I am sure that of the House of Commons, is with the new Burmese Government who are struggling to restore order in that country. Anything we can do to assist to that end we shall do. Of course, the growth of nationalism is inevitable and it has to be faced. When it comes, troubles of this character will arise. As a matter of fact, they were not unknown—this fact is sometimes forgotten—in this country centuries ago, when it was not all smooth sailing to work out the British Constitution as we have it now. I think that the Burmese Government and the Karens are standing up to this situation pretty well. I believe that they will find a solution between themselves which will enable them to restore order in their own country.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to Malaya. It is quite true that His Majesty's Government have known for some time that this policy on the part of the Communists of the world was working, but no one knew exactly in what form

or where it was going to break out. Even if we suppress it in Malaya, as we shall, it may break out in Africa or somewhere else tomorrow, and the agents—[Laughter]—it is all very well for hon. Members opposite to laugh.

Mr. Scollan (Renfrew, Western) They would not understand. They never learn.

Mr. Bevin I am quite sure they would not. The Communist method in Malaya has followed an exact course. First of all, it was an attempt to engineer organised strikes. Happily the workers in that country followed the official advice, helped by British trade unions, and there was no chance for Communists to get in and influence the workers in their ordinary work. Few or no strikes took place. Then the Communists turned to the usual method, which is one of organised murder of isolated persons, and intimidation. They seek out such persons in order to intimidate the people and so to create a coup and take the Government over. I think that the way in which His Majesty's Government have tackled the Malayan position does great credit to them.

Mr. W. Fletcher Nonsense.

Mr. Bevin It has been much more thorough and much more direct, and more rapidly dealt with, than any other situation that we have had to face in the world in the past. As I say, the Communists turned to a campaign of murder. We are fully alive to these matters, we know what they involve. But it is putting a great strain on our forces. Tremendous pressure from this side of the House has been put upon His Majesty's Government to release men from the Army, but who was more insistent for rapid demobilisation and for the destruction of the Army at the end of the war than the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill)? In fact, during the Election, he considered how he could make an appeal by upsetting the demobilisation position.

Mr. Eden My right hon. Friend is not here, but it is fair that I should remind the House and the right hon. Gentleman that the proposal of my right hon. Friend was for rapid demobilisation to a certain figure, and that we are still far below the figure which he mentioned.

Mr. Bevin I am sorry, but I cannot accept that. [An HON. MEMBER; "Look up the Debate."] I know the pressure that was put on the Government at the time because the party opposite thought it would appeal to people and stir up prejudice. They made it very difficult at a very critical time. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] I am glad that I am getting under their skin. When they now chastise us for not having the troops and so on, let me ask them to read the speeches made on demobilisation at that time, not only in this House but outside. No one has been firmer than I have; I think the right hon. Gentleman will give me credit, both in the Coalition Government and since the war, for trying to get an orderly post-war defence system in this country in the teeth of opposition by many of my own friends—[Laughter]—it is quite true; so also is the meanness of our opponents, from the point of view of the cost, which I had to face.

The question of having sufficient troops is the responsibility of this House as a whole. Both sides were involved in the dismemberment of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force as quickly as possible without regard to the fact that peace had not been established. However, we have reorganised the police forces. [Interruption.] A police force organised in the Malayan States, or in London if one likes, is not normally organised for the purpose of dealing with bandits; it is organised for dealing with ordinary law and order and ordinary citizens. In Malaya, our police forces suddenly had this additional burden thrown on them, and a need for complete reorganisation in intelligence services and other services has also been involved.

I have been asked about arms. Arms and ammunition have been issued to civilians. The regular police force has been augmented by 100 officers, mainly from the Palestine Police Force—

Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University) At what date?

Mr. Bevin—and by 3,000 other ranks since July. [An HON. MEMBER: "Too late."] If hon. Members will only wait I will give them the details. Some 10,000 special constables have been trained and armed, over 300 Palestine police sergeants have already been flown from this country, and a further 216 are to leave before the end of this month. It is our aim to provide every estate as soon as possible with the maximum number of trained and armed defenders, quite apart from the regular police and the military.

I realise, and I acknowledge, that dealing with a trouble of this kind will be slow and difficult. It will be a terrific task to put an end to these terrorist gangs. We are under no delusion as to what is involved, and I hope that no Member of this House is under any delusion either. The trouble in the territory is not the fault of the Malaysians themselves or of the other reputable sections of the population, such as the Chinese and other races who are living there; it arises from sections of the population, mainly Chinese Communists, who have been given special assignments to go in and organise this trouble—

Mr. Gallacher It is not true.

Mr. Bevin I assure the hon. Member that it is. Nobody knows better than the hon. Member for West Fife what a special assignment is. We know the special assignments which have been given to them in our unions. We have had to meet it hitherto, and we know the reports which they have had to send showing how they have carried out their assignments. We have had an opportunity of reading and studying them on many occasions. Therefore, we are up against a plan.

Unfortunately, a price has had to be paid by many good citizens. I would like to pay a tribute to the dauntless spirit of the men and women of both communities who have refused to yield to the intimidation of ruthless enemies. Up to date 170 civilians have been murdered: that includes 12 Europeans. The remainder have been mainly Chinese who refused to co-operate with the terrorists. There have also been 110 wounded. On the other side, 120 of the enemy have been killed, and a substantial amount of arms, ammunition and explosives has been recovered. We are getting co-operation from Siam on the frontier in this matter as well. Forty of our own forces of all races, military and police, have been killed. About 7,000 persons have been detained. They are now being dealt with and screened, and those who have nothing against them are being allowed to go.

The problem is a difficult and vexed one, but His Majesty's Government have no intention of yielding to this terror. There have been arguments—I have seen them in the Press—that this is not really a terror but something springing from the hatred of the wicked capitalists of the West and the tyranny they have exercised. It is nothing of the sort. The progress that has been made in education and the development of social and economic policy, together with constitutional developments in the three years from the end of the war, is really remarkable. It must be remembered that at one period during that time we have had to face what was almost tantamount to a famine in South-East Asia. That was grappled with by the colonial organisation in a remarkable way.

That is my answer regarding Malaya. I can only assure the House that we shall pursue our policy with vigour. Not only in Malaya, for if this policy of stirring up civil war as an instrument of policy goes on—I repeat, if it goes on—as it has gone on ever since the war closed, first in one territory and then in another, no one can foresee the end to which it will lead the nations who are promoting it. For ourselves, I think the Commonwealth itself is now seized of the effects of this policy, and wherever it rears its ugly head we shall do our best to stamp it out. We shall use our maximum resources to do it. If we do not, there will never be a peace settlement, and harmony will never be established in the world.

There was a reference to European cooperation. I do not want to detain the House any longer than I can help, but I feel that, in view of the discussions which have gone on in connection with this matter, something ought to be said immediately. Hence I came today to reply to the points which the right hon. Gentleman very kindly informed me he intended to raise. I feel that it is necessary, in view of the implications behind statements which have been made in the

United States and elsewhere, that we are lukewarm in this matter. It is desirable that the contribution that Great Britain has made and is making to unity in Western Europe should be known. Our policy has not been a spectacular one. It is easy to call a conference, it is easy to have the floodlights on, it is easy to do all that kind of thing; but in view of the tradition of Western Europe, I am sure the House will agree that it will be a long, tedious and difficult job to build it firmly and establish it on sure ground.

When I became Foreign Secretary in 1945, I said then, after examining the whole position, that the only policy I could see for us to 'pursue was to join in a supreme effort to try to rescue Europe—or as much of it as we could. I confess that I had misgivings as to the kind of attitude we should meet in that work, but I never anticipated that it would be so difficult as it has proved to be. We contributed to U.N.R.R.A. as a part, a very great part, of the contribution to rescue Europe, to steady it, to stop starvation and all the difficulties which had arisen out of the war. We realised that we had to contribute to the best of our ability and, at the same time, to carry with us, if we could, not only the present resources of the Commonwealth but also the potential resources of the Commonwealth and Empire and of the overseas territories' of other European countries.

The question was asked: what was the object of our foreign policy? The very point was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington. We wanted to be independent of any other great Powers. I do not believe that Great Britain itself can be independent of other great Powers in peace any more than we can in war. What I do believe is that if we build up a self-reliant, independent and rejuvenated Europe, and succeed in repairing the ravages not of one war but of two wars, then there is a possibility of restoring a better equilibrium in the world.

We have had to face of course—and I must remind the House of it—in every economic fact before us, whether we turn to coal, steel, transport, or anything else upon which demands are now being made for production to meet our post-war needs, we have had to face the neglect of those 20 years between the wars. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] It is there. Hon. Members opposite do not like this. But, if they were in our shoes, they would find every way they turned that this or that organisation had not been geared up, or kept going, that others had not been planned, that they were short, that they had no reserve capacity—as we did not have in the war in steel itself—not a single reserve capacity. Therefore that is a handicap now, and no amount of shouting from the Benches can alter the facts. They are there. I know we run like hell under a threat, but we are a bit slow when the threat is not there. Think that one out. I know about production now, but I am thinking of it in 1931.

Therefore, we had hoped to compensate a good deal, both for the destruction and for the difficulties we had to face in Europe, by trying to get four-Power co-operation. Now it may be said, "You were silly ever to rely on it." But my predecessors relied on it. I tried to follow it. I think we all hoped for it, we worked for it, and it is not our fault—neither theirs nor mine—that we did not achieve it. The Foreign Office at least—the one great perfect Department of State—was quite correct in its approach to this problem.

If we had got over this economic difficulty, the rescue of the liberated countries we thought we would create a more congenial and happier atmosphere for the subsequent political discussions. Now it is not my intention to discuss all these disappointments—it is not worth while, they are there—but I do think it is essential, especially in view of the statements that have been made that we are dragging our feet, to give a brief review of the actual work we have done. Some of our friends in this country and outside maintain that because we do not change our policy, or turn from our course every time a public speech is made, and go chasing some other proposal we have become cool or lost faith or that we are not pursuing the policy with all the vigour at our command.

Let me then deal first with economic co-operation. I would recall to the House that our participation in the rehabilitation of Europe started the moment the war was over. Hon. Members will recall a series of actions showing our willingness and anxiety to cooperate in European reconstruction, and that at a moment when we were not very well off ourselves. Our policy, then, was to do all we could for war-shattered Europe. It was during this period, before

Mr. Marshall's Harvard speech, that, on our initiative, the Anglo-French and the Anglo-Italian Committees were set up to review periodically the state of the economic and financial relations between the countries arising out of the bilateral agreements that were made. Since then further committees have come into being, with regular meetings with other countries, in order constantly to review this development, and in the end these committees have made a valuable contribution to the O.E.E.C. in Paris.

That brought us up to the time when Mr. Marshall made his famous speech. Will anyone in the House say that His Majesty's Government can be accused of lack of initiative in taking hold of that magnificent offer? We faced not only the task of going into the economics of it, but we faced a bitter hostility on the part of Russia and a negative attitude induced by force on the part of the satellite States. In spite of all these threats we went on with our work, together with the French. A planned economic development took place and the team of men we appointed under the leadership of Sir Oliver Franks, I think, did a great job in bringing about the first reports which, I shall show in a minute, led to the greatest piece of co-operation in Europe that has ever existed. The details of it, the actual payments part, will be dealt with by the Chancellor on Thursday.

It will be admitted, I think, that the Paris Report was brought out in an incredibly short time. It was arranged for Sir Oliver Franks to lead the European team which went to the United States to discuss the programme. It is quite true that the actual organisation for European economic co-operation could not be established until the United States Government had decided their policy, but all the preparations were made and in existence before that decision took place in the United States. In that connection, and with the object of promoting European co-operation, we established a body which in my view augurs well and which, if handled aright and with the spirit of agreement that has already developed in it, can make a great contribution to this process. M. Spaak, the distinguished Prime Minister of Belgium, undertook the chairmanship, and Great Britain undertook the chairmanship of the Executive Committee.

I can, therefore, say without boasting that we have not only been strongly represented, but that we have not hesitated to select the best men we have in this country to deal with this vital problem. Here let me pay tribute to the very fine work of officials both inside and outside the Government who have helped to perform this important task. In France, the French found us M. Marjolin, the Secretary-General, a young man who has done a magnificent job in that position. I am sure that those who are fully conversant with the Organisation will agree that the United Kingdom representatives have played a noble part in this work.

I am giving these details to the House because there is a tendency to oversimplify the problem, and I was glad to note that, in the speech which the right hon. Gentleman made, he did clarify his position a good deal by saying, "If you do not pursue this plan, what plan are you going to pursue?" I think that it is just this that the country wants to know, and it is because I do not want to be forced into the acceptance of some plan which has been carried at a conference and which might nullify or stop the process which is now going on, that we are exercising caution about all the resolutions and decisions that are being sent to us. I want stimulation, and I want constructive help. This is not even a party matter, I admit. It is a question of nations being brought together for their economic co-operation and their survival in the future.

I do ask people, both in this country and in other countries, to understand that, in trying first to devise the economic unity of Europe, and later the political associations, it will not be done by simplified or spectacular means but by one planned effort followed by other planned efforts in order that these shall dovetail together into a complete plan. One of the great tasks which had to be attempted was the division of the first year's Aid amongst the member countries, and the European Payments Scheme. This was a very difficult job indeed. The Organisation for European Economic Cooperation has been in existence only about five months. It is tackling a job of international economic planning that has never before been attempted. It is really important that hon. Members should realise the actual constructive work that has taken place. The division of Aid was a most difficult task. Here we were, large nations and small nations,

before whom, as it were, a cake was placed which had to be divided up, not equally, but according to the individual needs of each country. Before we could divide it up, we had to get agreement by all of them, and that, I suggest, is a very difficult task indeed. We have been doubtful the whole time about getting agreement, and we have had, it is true, to make sacrifices ourselves. Indeed, if anyone rides off with the idea that we are going to build European union or economic co-operation without mutual sacrifices he is suffering under a fatal delusion. One of the things which we have stuck to very rigidly and with great insistence is that there must be a common pool if ever we are to get this system to work. Having divided the Aid, we are now awaiting for the decision of the European Co-operation Administrator.

But our task was not limited to making this division. The next step that had to be taken was to reach an agreement covering the use of other currencies besides dollars in Europe, and this is a very vexed question indeed. It is pretty horrible that in view of the present currency position in Europe, we cannot send tourists to Belgium, and we cannot buy the goods we want. Therefore, we have had to deal with this problem, and the steps we have taken will be dealt with in detail by the Chancellor. I only point out, from my point of view at the Foreign Office that I have stressed all I can the need to get this currency business settled. I want to get rid of every snag which is stopping the freedom of movement throughout Western Europe as soon as I can, and any handicaps to the execution of this policy have to be removed as quickly as possible. But this involves Belgium and this country in making very great efforts to help to get the necessary co-operation, and these efforts have been made. Their purpose is to make the right basic conditions in which Western Union can function and operate.

Now, we have another task—a tremendous task—which has been engaging us. This is to work out a long term programme, a four-year programme for 16 countries. That is where the integration and common effort will really be involved. It is difficult enough to work out a programme for one country, so it is much more difficult to work it out for 16 countries. The participating countries have agreed to put forward this joint agreed programme for European recovery, and it means that the national programmes have to be merged into one joint plan. That is the next step. In reply to the right hon. Gentleman who spoke about economic co-operation and asked where it was intended to lead, I would say that, first, it leads to overcoming the difficulties in the next four years, but I would also remind the House that the O.E.E.C. has been designed as a continuing organisation. It does not end after four years. When we get past the period of Aid, we continue in order that Western Europe may still co-operate to stand on its own feet and pay its own way. That is the objective that we are striving for now.

It is true that, in the development of the plan, the United States are making a great contribution, but it is in their own interests as it is in ours to get stability in Europe and to get stability all over the world as quickly as we can. No one who has dealt with this problem will deny that in the past these countries knew very little about each other's business. They moved in an atmosphere of secrecy. In the old days, they knew very little about these matters; they were left outside the scope of Governments, and I do not complain about that at all. So far as those countries which have been competing with one another are concerned, it has been very difficult to get competitors to reveal their secrets and facts and to agree to make their contributions to a common pool. We have had to show our economic and financial situation, and it will be agreed that that is one of the most tender spots which we have to deal with in international affairs. Therefore, on the economic side, we have developed O.E.E.C., contributed all these facts and brought the problem up for examination with a great measure of success.

Turning now to the political side, what has happened? Equally important progress has been made. We began with our French friends and the Dunkirk Treaty. This was followed by the Brussels Treaty, which marked an important departure in international affairs. It created, as I said when I reported it to the House, a functional body designed to harmonise policies between the countries concerned. The machinery of the Brussels Treaty is working well, and there have been quarterly meetings of the consultative Committee. I think the right hon. Gentleman who preceded me would have welcomed in his day a Western European Union with quarterly meetings of the Foreign Ministers of our

immediate neighbours. If we can widen it in time, so much the better, but we cannot push these functional bodies; we have to lead them. The Permanent Commission has been in constant session.

There is a matter concerning European Union which was raised at The Hague Conference and on which I think an injustice was done to the Government. I would remind the House that it was I who proposed that all these matters which have been raised from time to time on the development of Western Europe should be examined by the Permanent Commission so that it might make its contribution to this purpose and the Consultative Committee would be able to meet quarterly. In addition, there have been meetings of the Ministers of Defence, and it is only an accident, as the right hon. Gentleman said, of the French political situation that has prevented more meetings.

I was hoping that by this time the Military Committee would have made such good progress that we would have been in a far more advanced position on defence than we are at the moment, but that is beyond my control or that of the Government. Another interesting feature of this Military Committee is that American and Canadian observers have been associated with its work and with the great strides which have been made towards the organisation of a common defence system and a plan to resist aggression from wherever it might come. This is very important from an economic and financial point of view. Armies cost money, and if there can be a planned defence system for Western Union which makes the greatest contribution to security with a minimum of cost it will be of great advantage to the economies of all countries. The Military Committee has already reported and the Defence Ministers will be meeting to consider that report in a few days.

In addition to this, the whole area of regional security is being examined, and we are now proceeding to the next stage of development. We have been hoping and striving, and, immediately the United Nations met, we proposed that the Military Committee should meet with the other functional bodies to deal with the question of defence and the proposals in the Charter for regional defence, but we made no progress. We cannot just sit still and wait for the United Nations to deal with this question at its next meeting; we must work these things out, and I believe that other people are ready to co-operate with us and join with us. In the economic field, I have already described the steps that have been taken and the proposals that have been complementary to the help which has been contributed to the O.E.E.C. in its work. I have mentioned this to indicate that in the field of politics and in the field of economics we have been struggling to establish Western Union on a very sound foundation.

Now I wish to turn to the future. We do not want to be diverted from this task of building up in the manner we have commenced. We are asked now to propose a constitution, to call an assembly and draft a constitution for Western Europe. I have referred to some of the proposals which have been made. I do not want to be taken amiss and I do not want anyone to think that I am throwing cold water on the suggestions, but really they will not stand the test of examination for a moment. The result of the proposals put out at Interlaken the other day would be, for example, the raising of the problem of our existing treaty obligations to foreign countries, for if we are to surrender part of our sovereign rights to an international body, in the manner proposed, we shall no longer be able to fulfil some of them, but shall have to cancel them. That would affect all our overseas territories. It is proposed that they cease to exist as separate States—

Sir Peter Macdonald (Isle of Wight) With which proposals is the right hon. Gentleman dealing?

Mr. Bevin The Interlaken proposals.

Sir P. Macdonald The final proposals, or the earlier proposals?

Mr. Bevin The whole of the proposals which I have read.

Sir P. Macdonald Proposals were put forward by an hon. Member of the right hon. Gentleman's own party which were rejected by the Interlaken Conference. Since then other proposals have been put forward. Is it the final proposals, or the original proposals made by an hon. Member of his own party with which the right hon. Gentleman is dealing?

Mr. Bevin I think it applies to nearly all the schemes. I read those sent to me, but I did not look to see if they were final. The same germ runs through the whole of them. I am not trying to criticise, but am pointing out that when one starts constitution-making in this way, one raises a lot of problems. I have often said that I amalgamated a lot of unions into one union, but the first thing I looked at was the assets.

Mr. Osborne (Louth) Jolly good capitalism.

Mr. Bevin I did not proceed by telling the other people that I was going to discard them before I began discussing them. That seems to be the approach in these proposals. The dissipation of these assets would weaken each member State and I do not think that that is the right way to approach the matter. A written constitution is suggested now and we are told in America and elsewhere that we are fools because we do not run after them. I am not being unkind even to the United States, but it is well to remind them that it took 11 years to deal with their constitution. They did not proceed with quite the rapidity of getting it through in 11 months. It is only a little while since we signed the Brussels Treaty. I realise that there are fast movers in the world, but I cannot deal with all the mass production in the world in 11 months when it took them 11 years.

I ask hon. Members to be a little objective in dealing with this problem. This country has no written constitution and when one looks at the possible effect on this country of trying to dovetail ours into written constitutions, one sees that it raises very difficult problems. While the constituent States of the Commonwealth have constitutions of their own, there is no collective constitution. The only thing governing them is the Statute of Westminster. It is a great free association of nations to which everyone refers on election platforms and says what a great thing it is. And I agree. It is a factor which must not be ignored in discussing this problem. Another factor is that the countries in Europe are old countries. It is easy to pass these resolutions, but when it comes to meeting the actual members of the Governments to carry this out, we will find there will be terrific controversy, and anyone who has had any experience of drafting constitutions knows how difficult it is.

I say to the right hon. Gentleman, who I know is keenly interested in this matter—and I welcome his interest as well as that of other hon. Members—that I take the view that the way to proceed is as the Prime Minister said in his letter: first, consult the Commonwealth itself. I do not see anything derogatory in consulting the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Prime Ministers. I cannot see why we are criticised for that. We want a frank and full discussion with them. Their interests are at stake. Why are we told that we are lukewarm and why are we criticised because we suggest we should wait until October in order to talk with them? I thought it very shortsighted to put that argument against the Prime Minister and His Majesty's Government.

I feel that the intricacies of Western Europe are such that we had better proceed—I am not dogmatic about this—on the same principle of association of nations that we have in the Commonwealth. Britain has to be in both places; she has to be and must remain the centre of the Commonwealth itself and she must be European. It is a very difficult role to play. It is different from that of anyone else and I think that adopting the principle of an unwritten constitution, and the process of constant association step by step, by treaty and agreement and by taking on certain things collectively instead of by ourselves, is the right way to approach this Western Union problem. When we have settled the matter of defence, economic co-operation and the necessary political developments which must follow, it may be possible, and I think it will be, to establish among us some kind of assembly to deal with the practical things we have accomplished as Governments, but I do not think it will work if we try to put the roof on before we have built the building.



The policy of His Majesty's Government is as it began, to continue this day-by-day endeavour through the 16 nations we have now brought together and through the Commonwealth. And this is important—if one looks at the map and takes the British Commonwealth and its population and the population of Europe instead of limiting oneself primarily to purely Western Union in the sense of Western European union, if one can get an association of nations comprising what are now the States of Western Europe, ourselves and the Commonwealth, running, as it were, through the middle of this planet with its great potentiality and wealth, if that can be brought together, a force for peace and equality and equilibrium can be established which ought to make for peace for generations to come.

4.26 p.m.

Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University) If it were my duty to answer in general the right hon. Gentleman who has just held the House I might find it difficult. There were so many of his sentences of which I felt almost optimistic enough to think I had gathered the general drift while they were being uttered, but which in the course of the next sentences I felt must have meant something quite different from what I had earlier supposed. One thing he did say to which, as seldom happens to me when it is said by right hon. Gentlemen, I can make a positive reply: he invited stimulation and constructive help. I think when constructive help is asked what is always desired is agreement: and I was able to agree with him, as far as I could understand it, in the general drift of the last part of his speech, although I was not able to grasp the details. That is to say, I do agree with him that the only way to hope for European co-operation is by doing things bit by bit, by getting one segment, then another segment, into the pattern, until finally the segments make a circle, rather than supposing you can burn all the stopping places, as the French say, by pretending to agree on the circumference and hoping and assuming all the segments have fitted in. That, I understand, was the general drift of the latter part of his speech. If I am wrong, I shall no doubt be corrected by a later speaker, but if not I offer my general support on that, which I think is what is generally meant when we are asked to be constructive.

There are one or two rather special things I wish to talk about. I was glad to note that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is to address us later. May I ask a question which I hope he will answer, whether he can give a fuller answer on the history of the Canadian dollars, about which we were told at the end of July, just before we went away, and about which there were some letters in "The Times," but which I think has never been explained? We listened for a very long time to the right hon. Gentleman, the Foreign Secretary. I am sorry he cannot stand five minutes of me.

Mr. Bevin I am not leaving through discourtesy to the hon. Member, but I have to keep an appointment at half-past four and I apologise to the House that I have to go.

Mr. Pickthorn I am sorry the right hon. Gentleman has an appointment to keep, but I think it illustrates the general attitude of this Parliament and these Ministers. Appointments of Foreign Secretaries on an occasion like this, fixed by them, should be on the Floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich) Is the hon. Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) aware of what the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) regularly did in the last Parliament?

Mr. Pickthorn I am not in the least interested—[HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he now?"]—I am not in the least interested in bandying personal scores, I am talking of Ministers. Hon. Members opposite should be a little careful. We are refraining from discussing Germany and Berlin at the request of their Ministers and have done so for month after month. Never have a Government enjoyed such restraint from an Opposition, never. I do not hesitate to say never, and if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite cannot find it possible to listen to us on those topics they do allow us to mention, they must not expect us to continue always to withhold our attention from topics they desire left alone.

Mr. Logan (Liverpool, Scotland Division) Will the hon. Member explain—

Mr. Pickthorn No, I have had enough. That business of postponing for a week brings me to another point I wish to make. We were told nothing about Hyderabad. I do not say it in criticism of the right hon. Gentleman's personal capacities, no doubt it was in pursuance of policy, but I challenge any hon. Member to say what is the view of the Government on Hyderabad. That was to be left for a week, and Germany and Berlin are left for a week. We are told over and over again to wait. On Palestine we were told over and over again to wait. We have asked for Debates about Malaya. This House is sometimes run down by fools as a mere talking shop, but I think there is a very strong case indeed for the opinion that if Malaya had been fully discussed two years ago, 18 months ago, or even a year ago, the horrible situation which has arisen now in Malaya would not have happened; I think that even the Colonial Secretary, if he could be imagined doing anything, might have done something. But over and over again we have been told that these things were to be left to the convenience of His Majesty's Government, until the disasters got worse and worse.

Today, the right hon. Gentleman who has engagements elsewhere, said, "Well, after all, if we had prevented it in Malaya it would probably have broken out somewhere else." If the right hon. Gentleman had had a boil on the back of his neck I imagine that he would not have thought it a really good reason to cultivate boils on the back of the neck because otherwise they might burst out somewhere else.

I do not think that any very elaborate argument is needed about whether the trouble in Malaya is a Communist rebellion or whether it is an outbreak of gangsterism, secret societies and all that.

Mrs. Leah Manning (Epping) National sentiment.

Mr. Pickthorn National sentiment?

Mrs. Manning Yes.

Mr. Pickthorn There are not Parliamentary words for that kind of interjection. There is no doubt that there was disorder in Malaya, not all of it an organised Communist rebellion, not all of it even intended to contribute to such a rebellion, which was largely the sequence to events during the war—including the resistance movement policy which I believe did more harm than good in practically every country. I said so at the time. There was the endemic Chinese secret society, faction—fighting, racketeering, taking of protection money, all that, which has made it impossible for there to be organic nationality anywhere in any Chinese occupied country. There were these things, it is quite true.

It is also quite true that it long ago became plain that these things had been welded together and were being used as part of a world wide war—that is what it is, although it is not the official word used—against His Majesty's Government. What did His Majesty's Government do about that particular part of the war? Did they make any representations to the great personages behind it? I think we ought to be told that. The Foreign Secretary made it quite plain today where he thought all the pushing, organising and integrating of this trouble came from. He made that perfectly plain. When was it first plain to him? As soon as it was plain to His Majesty's Foreign Secretary, it was his duty to make representations to the Government concerned. Will the Colonial Secretary tell us when that was done and, if not, why it has not been done, and when it is going to be done?

There is a curious kind of fatality about the way hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite continually parody their own nonsense: for instance, when one thinks of the stuff they used to talk before the war about the exploitation by a few Europeans going to the East merely to grind the faces of the poor Oriental peasant and come home with money. But now, so far as they are not wholly dependent on charity from our transatlantic cousins, they are dependent upon the dollars they can get from the products of Malaya. Even when they have got to that point of parodying their own nonsense, they do not stimulate themselves into enough sense to see that these things must be done in some kind of logical concatenation.

The right hon. Gentleman told us that considering everything there had, during the last few years, been the most marvellous constitutional progress in Malaya, social progress in Malaya, educational progress in Malaya. These are very good things, each one of them, but what society in the world would be grateful for such progress if it had to pay the price which is being paid in Malaya? And the price is being paid precisely because the "progress" was in the wrong order; and it is being paid precisely because of the invincible ignorance of the Colonial Secretary and other right hon. Gentlemen. Any man may be forgiven for ignorance but the invincible ignorance, the determination not to learn, the vain persistence in silliness. these are really unique in history.

My right hon. Friend who preceded me from this side of the House asked some questions which he phrased in what, if I may say so without impertinence, was from a Front Bench speaker a proper and necessary vagueness, about whether reinforcements and materials had been sent as they were asked for? The Foreign Secretary told us that they had. I have no hesitation in saying that the Foreign Secretary has been misinformed. Reinforcements were not sent as and when they were asked for. Legislative measures were not taken as and when they were asked for. Have the police yet got any radio machines? Does the Colonial Secretary know? They had not, a very few weeks ago, although they had been asked for long ago. Transport—modern motor vehicles—for police purposes were asked for long ago. I do not know if they are there yet. If so, that is very recent.

I would ask the Colonial Secretary to listen to me. I am sorry if I am speaking dully. I wish the Colonial Secretary to answer this question: It is no use saying that one has despatched all that one has been asked for if, when a man is drowning and says, "Throw me a rope," one says, "I am awfully sorry, old boy, I am busy with social; educational and constitutional progress," and then ten minutes or so later one gets a rope and grappling iron and pulls him up to the surface. Even if by hours and hours of artificial respiration one finally brings him round to life again, it is no use boasting that one despatched everything which was asked for.

I ask the Colonial Secretary to face what conscience he has, and we know he has one, and tell us upon what dates these things were asked for and upon what dates it was decided to despatch them. I tell him that there is ample evidence at my disposal in this matter. If I had the time I could produce it at length to the House. I would like to ask him about one or two other specific questions. He will remember the Trade Union Amendment Bill and that the provision in it that no one should be an official of a trade union unless he had already been three years in work of the relevant sort was cut out on advice from Whitehall. It had to be put in again some weeks later. Why the delay? Incidentally, I detest very much the growing practice in this House of paying what are called tributes to civil servants. I think it is a bad practice. If we are to pay tributes I do not see how we are to be precluded also from attacking civil servants. But so far as my information goes about Mr. Brazier—I am not sure whether he is technically a civil servant or not—and about the gentleman who is responsible for what we should call Ministry of Labour affairs, no one has anything but gratitude and respect for them and their work. It is not them in the least that I am attacking, it is the policy of the Administration, and particularly the policy of the Administration as dictated from Whitehall, sometimes as specifically dictated from Whitehall and at other times as in effect dictated, as Whitehall knows, by the well known method of expecting the chap at the other end to say what he knows one expects him to say.

These are the charges. I say that these charges are quite unanswerable. What has now happened? There is extreme trouble, which trouble, as extreme and continuous, began with the Kedah riots, getting on for two years ago. Everything that has happened since was predicted over and over again to the right hon. Gentleman or to his advisers in Malaya from that time onwards. Indeed, his right hon. Friend gave him away before he left us for another engagement. He told us that this trouble had followed in the exact pattern with which he had been familiar all over the world. He saw it all coming, apparently. I believe that if he did not see the actual dates on which it was coming it was because he would not hear. Nothing was done until it was much too late, because we were all being so busy with constitutional and educational and social progress and the rest of it.

I think the phrase I am about to use is rather a good one, so it is not my own, I warn the House. I think it comes from a Malayan newspaper: "Constitutions before rice, trade unions before law and order, the collection of Income Tax before there were any Income Tax collectors." Every theoretical horse madly butting into every practical cart and pushing it into every ditch that can be found. That's a fair short description of His Majesty's Government in Malaya. [Laughter.] It is not at all funny. That has been the short history of Malaya over the last three years. When one thinks of what these right hon. Gentlemen have done elsewhere, in Palestine, Egypt, India and Burma, what they have done or not done in Siam, this is almost the only little bit of land between us and Australia that has not been reduced almost to ruin and utterly out of our control.

It is a marvellous comment on all the right hon. Gentleman's conventional and professional sentiments and opinions about Asia that even now, even at the worst—and make no mistake we nearly lost Malaya and if we are not careful it is still possible that we may do so—even now, even with all these murders, compared with the rest of Asia, Malaya is almost a paradise. "Là tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, Luxe, calme et volupté." One might almost say that of Malaya, comparatively, even now, even after the condition to which these right hon. Gentlemen have reduced it.

I wish to say one final thing about Malaya, and then I will jettison the other things which I had wished to say on other subjects. There has been talk in some papers about planters being in the front line, someone has said that planters are in "No man's land." How many planters and mine managers does the right hon. Gentleman suppose there are, who produce more gold dollars than the 50 million inhabitants of these islands? I do not know but I reckon there are not many more than 2,000. I do not know how many hon. Gentlemen were here when Singapore fell but I remember speeches, one at least and in especial, from what was then this side of the House, the joy, the rejoicing of, "Aha, these planters, swilling their whisky pegs, and their wives dancing at Raffles Hotel, are going to go through it now." [Interruption.] I could give hon. Gentlemen the references to some of those speeches. Now we have His Majesty's Government, boasting, and truly boasting, that quite clearly there could be no law and order left in Malaya if it were not that the immense majority of the Malayan people are clearly, in spite of all, favourable, at least, to put it mildly to the regime. It is perfectly clear that the whole thing would have gone up in smoke in July otherwise.

There are these 2,000 men. What is their average age? I do not know, but a very high proportion of them are over 50, some are over 60. Why are they there when they are so old? Partly because the "brave new world" which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have created is not such that young men will go out in dozens or hundreds, partly because that care for justice shown by this Government and hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite has removed from these men their savings, partly for those reasons these elderly men—almost, one can say, old men by tropical standards—are there living on their mines and estates, generally only one, sometimes only two, hardly ever as many as three, waiting and wondering which of their own employees is an infiltrated Communist or a Chinese secret club agent—or perhaps the same man both things—and will throw a bomb into the dining room that night, waiting and managing their estates. That is what these men are doing. I do not know how many right hon. Gentlemen opposite might, in such circumstances, find that their consciences dictated to them engagements elsewhere.

If any considerable proportion of these men did that, I should not in the very least blame them; but another very large hole would be knocked in the British Empire, which might perhaps please the Chancellor of the Exchequer, although I think even he begins to think about gold dollars and is not so ashamed of the British Empire as he used to be. These men have been there for the last—what is it? Eight, ten, eleven or more weeks—under such a strain for old men or young men, and remember, incidentally, that many of them had been for 2½ years prisoners of the Japanese, and by their bearing largely saved our prestige. Incidentally what is the one unforgivable thing in Empire? It is to fail to protect. We failed to protect.

*Mr. Stokes* And the right hon. Member for Woodford.

Mr. Pickthorn It is not the least use the large gentleman below the Gangway, whose name for the moment I forget, endeavouring to pursue, through me, a vendetta against the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill). I have sometimes in the past criticised the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford and like everyone else I am free to criticise him again, but this stuff about 20 years of Tory misrule must really stop. I meant to stop speaking, but now the hon. Member has started me on that point—it is time it stopped, it really is. The right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary painted his usual picture of himself today, perhaps in rather more detail than usual. I must say he made me think of Napoleon. Napoleon would never employ an unlucky general and I feel that anyone so unlucky as the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary makes himself out to be really ought not to be employed in any capacity at all. He painted a picture of himself simultaneously facing a stab in the back and the meanness of the Opposition, engaged in one constant effort, to be followed by many other efforts, all dovetailed together, to get 16 nations round a table to make, as far as I could gather, four programmes, at the end of which apparently as in the famous recipe for anchovy salad, you throw the whole lot over the side and start again. After the picture he painted of his own accident-proneness, I cannot believe that any employers liability association would really take him on.

That is by the way. I return to the planters of Malaya. The last thing done in the Malayan Legislative Council—I must again ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his attention; he has a great deal to attend to and part of his duties is to attend to this House; I am now discussing his business, which he has neglected, shamefully neglected. What was the last thing which happened in the Legislative Council? I think almost the last in the papers I have seen, was a motion calling upon His Majesty's Government to bear the whole cost of the present disturbances. Nobody wants to reduce this thing to pounds, shillings and pence, though I think even hon. Gentlemen and right hon. Gentlemen opposite now know that (a) no symbol is meaningless and (b) that pounds, shillings and pence are perhaps even less meaningless than most other symbols. Pounds, shillings and pence represent claims on men's activities.

His Majesty's Government recently made an announcement—I think it was in April, was it not?—which was certainly read in Malaya as meaning that we were not going to pay any part of the post-war reparations costs above £10 million. Is that the intention of His Majesty's Government? It is certainly read there as meaning that they are to get £10 million out of Japan—if and when—£10 million from His Majesty's Government, and are to raise all the rest themselves, although the whole lot arose from the failings of His Majesty's Government.. I do not mean His Majesty's present advisers. The blame is on all of us. I have never hesitated to take my share of it. Is it not natural that their reply from Malaya should be, "At the very least you must take over the cost of all these present disturbances." That is already many, many millions of dollars. I have the figures somewhere here, but I will not weary the House any longer.

I think I have made clear the questions I wish the Colonial Secretary to answer, and if they are not clear to his hon. Friend from the Foreign Office, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I am quite willing to go over the whole thing again. I think I have made clear what are the questions I want answered.

The other thing I wish to mention was this stuff about "between the wars." It really must be stopped. Of course, anybody can always say, "Well, I could manage easily enough now if only I had been managing for the previous 20 years." But that is not how right hon. Gentlemen opposite got into power. They got into power by saying that, in the circumstances they knew in 1945, they could manage very well. Their business now is to manage a great deal better than they have done yet, or get out.

There is another thing. The Foreign Secretary told us today that so long as you have some nations willing to use sabotage, murder, disturbances of social arrangements as instruments of foreign policy, so long there can be no real peace. I am not quoting him textually, and I hope one of his hon. Friends will correct me if that is not a fair representation of what he said. It comes oddly from the benches opposite. When are they going to stop saying, "If the Tories get in there will be strikes all over the industrial field"? When is the Lord President of the Council going to stop saying—he said it only a few weeks ago—that really the Russians ought to be nicer to us because it was Ernie who

stopped that arms ship going—I have forgotten when. It is precisely the same principle. Do not think the Communists invented this technique. It is no use Mr. Morgan Phillips now saying that trade unions are very nice things, but they ought not to be used for political purposes: it is equally useless the Foreign Secretary saying that so long as in international affairs people will use sabotage and other common-law misbehaviour as weapons for political results, so long there will be no peace in the world. Though the right hon. Gentleman never said a truer word.

4.53 p.m.

Mr. Clement Davies (Montgomery) The situation here and abroad is so serious and so many of the problems are fraught with such dangers that it was not only, in my opinion, right and proper that this House should have been summoned this week, but it would have been a dereliction of duty, and a serious dereliction of duty, if His Majesty's Government had not re-summoned this House.

I would, therefore, express my disappointment and surprise that the Gracious Speech from the Throne should have been limited to one subject, because the seriousness of the situation both here, economically, and abroad, especially in Europe, has been so pressing on the minds of all of us that we certainly expected full reference to be made to it in the Gracious Speech from the Throne. What has happened? Since the Motion which we are now discussing was moved, there has been practically no reference whatever to the one and only subject which is contained in the Gracious Speech. There have been discussions upon a whole series of subjects and some of them, of course, we understand have had to be postponed. Take the very able speech which has just been delivered by the senior Burgess for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) on the position in Malaya and what should have happened there in order to restore it: that cannot possibly be discussed in just two speeches. It is a matter which in itself deserves a full Debate.

I cannot do more than refer to the many subjects raised by the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden). Might I say just this: there is no one who does not deeply regret that there should be resort to arms and fratricidal warfare in India. I should have liked to hear something more from the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary with regard to steps we could take in order to try and stop bloodshed. After all, we have been responsible for that great sub-continent for 300 years. We maintained law and order and were responsible for the administration of law and justice there until only recently. Is there nothing more we can do than to say we will take our part when the matter comes before the United Nations? I do not wish to say more on that subject, however, except to express my sincere regret at the situation.

Again, I realise that more will have to be said about the position in Germany and the discussions in Berlin and Moscow, but the right hon. Gentleman the Lord President of the Council made a very serious statement yesterday about our defences. That, too, is a matter which this House must go into very fully and about which it must hear a great deal more. What is the state of our defences? What has really happened? I am very much afraid that there has been so much reliance upon conscription that the effect both upon the Regular Army and the Territorial Army has been disastrous. We would really like to have much more information about the steps which are being taken by the Government in regard to these matters. What has happened to all those highly-experienced and highly-trained men who have been demobilised between 1945 and 1948? Has careful touch been kept with them? Can they be called back? They are the very persons who can help most efficiently in a time of crisis if, unfortunately, the need should arise. That is another matter which will probably require a day or two's debate.

There is one other matter to which I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington made only one passing reference. I have been assured very kindly by the Foreign Secretary that the right hon. Gentleman who will be replying to this Debate at the end of this evening will make some statement on behalf of the Government about Palestine. May I say that I should imagine everybody is deeply grateful to Count Bernadotte and the wonderful work he has done in trying to obtain a truce and trying to keep these two peoples, Arabs and Jews, from further bloodshed. I am sure there is not one of us who does not express sincerely the hope that that truce will be a permanent

one and that it may lead to a permanent, just and satisfactory settlement. May I add this? There has been a considerable change in the position since we gave up the Mandate. There is now a responsible Government in Israel. As far as we can judge, it is very temperate and very fair, very anxious to stop the extremists on its own side from taking action which can lead only to extremists on the other side taking retaliatory action.

They have shown that they are capable of keeping control even over the worst elements. They have now been recognised by the U.S.A., Russia, South Africa and a great number of others. The matter, I know, is going before the United Nations, but cannot His Majesty's Government put in a sympathetic word at the present time? That might lead to a greater fusion between those Arabs who are obviously desirous of a settlement and the Israel Government of the Jewish people. That would certainly meet with the wishes and desires of all of us.

There are numbers of subjects which obviously not only is this House entitled to debate but which it should debate in fairness to itself and to the public. There was another matter raised by the right hon. Gentleman to which no answer has yet been forthcoming. What is the attitude now adopted by His Majesty's Government with regard, not to the prosecution, but to the persecution, of the German generals? Again, although we have taken quite a considerable pride in the fact that we are trying to rebuild the standard of life in Western Germany to enable them to take their proper part in the development of Europe, why is it that we still go on dismantling the factories there? These are matters upon which we would like to have fuller information, and I hope that an opportunity will be given to the House to discuss them.

May I now turn to the one and only subject, apparently, for which we have been called back? The right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington made an appeal, with which I absolutely concur, that at a time like this we should have as much unity as it is possible for us to have. Let us stop party manoeuvres. There is too often in the 'face of these enormous issues too much of what I would call shadow-boxing—quarrels about little things that do not matter, when really we should be concerned about the mightier things. It is appalling that in a world which has passed through two tremendous wars, which have lasted all these years and have done such tremendous damage and brought about the death of millions of people, we cannot go on with our ordinary vocations today without all the time fearing a third war, and not knowing when that catastrophe may hit us. So it is unfortunate that there should be so often quarrels about things that do not matter.

May I come, therefore, to the Parliament Bill? I said 12 months ago that I could not get very excited over it one way or another—either exhilarated if it passed or depressed if it did not pass. It is a small Measure, but may I say that since then a great opportunity was given to us all to settle this matter? That is why I would refer again to the right hon. Gentleman's remarks about unity. What a chance there was for the Conservative Party to settle this question once and for all. How near we were to agreement when all agreed that the hereditary system should go. All agreed that there should be a Second Chamber; all agreed that the Second Chamber should be composed of men or women who would hold office for life, but who would be put there strictly upon their merits and the positions which they had gained in the estimation of the country; that poverty should not be a bar to their entrance; and still more that, come what may, however good was the personnel within that Second Chamber, this House should always be the dominant one, and that even if the Second Chamber were composed of archangels, it was the will of the people here which ultimately should prevail.

That being so, we arrived then at the limitation of the powers of the Second Chamber, a limitation which has been imposed upon them since 1911; and what was it to amount to? So near were we to agreement, that we broke down on a mere question of three months. I was not surprised at the right hon. Gentleman, representing the Conservative Party, saying that they broke down on a point fundamental to both sides. I was surprised to find that the Lord President of the Council agreed.

Fundamentally from the point of progressive government, what has happened? Since 1911, any progressive government could only be quite sure of being able to pass Measures which it desired to pass and which it had been elected by the people to pass, in the first three years. What the Government were asking for—with which I and my colleagues agreed—was that there should be four complete Sessions—not a question of merely three months or twelve months, but four clear Sessions. But so far as the Conservatives were concerned, it was a question of only three months, or, if they like and care to put it that way, they were determined that no progressive government should have four Sessions. The objection was taken in the main to prevent something revolutionary taking place. Was there ever anything so flimsy as that? If any progressive government wanted to carry out something to which they most strongly objected, and to which they might apply the term "revolutionary," the Government had only to introduce it in the first year of office and the thing would go through automatically. Their only objection could be to the Government having a clear run over four years.

They objected to the present Bill, but when it came to a new House composed of men and women who had earned the respect of the country, who were to be there not because of their political positions, and who were not supposed to be of one political party so that that party would be in such an overwhelming position that no other views could be heard, they were prepared to give four full Sessions. They were prepared to say to them, "Very well, you shall act in this way; if you throw out a Measure then it shall be passed over your heads in a number of Sessions, and only twelve months from a Second Reading shall intervene." They want more power given to the present Second Chamber than they were prepared to give to a reformed Second Chamber. That is the kind of argument which I do not understand.

I want to end on this note. The right hon. Gentleman made an appeal for unity. May I make an appeal to his party that we can settle this question once and for all if we use real good will and real determination that this House shall be the dominant one, and responsible to the people for its own acts?

*5.10 p.m.*

Mr. Alfred Edwards (Middlesbrough, East) At the beginning of his speech, the Foreign Secretary seemed to go back to the inter-war years. It is on that reluctance to face the future that I want to speak today. The Foreign Secretary went on to say that the trouble about the balance of payments was entirely due to the negligence of another party, and particularly to the tariffs of 1931. I think it is time that it was said in this House that our difficulties today are due only to the fact that we bore very much more than our own share of the cost of the war. I do not think we ought to be apologetic about that.

We paid far too much long before America came into the war. It does not do for us or for America to forget the days of cash-and-carry long before Lend-Lease came into operation. We spent almost every dollar we had before America started her shipyards and aero-plane factories, and it was only when our resources were down, as the White Paper put it, to about £5 million worth of dollars that Lend-Lease came into operation. Those who care to take the trouble to look up the Mutual Aid Agreement will find that the first clause stated that the purpose of the Agreement was not to help this country or other European countries, but to defend America's shores in Europe, which is a very good place to defend them. I do not think it is fair to us or to America to put the blame anywhere else than where it belongs. Had this country paid only its fair share of the cost of the war, we should not now have had to borrow from anyone.

Another thing I should like to say is that nothing has caused such bad feeling between America and this country as the constant reiteration of the statement that this country has never paid its war debts to America. I heard that statement made in the House during a Debate this year. It is time we looked at the facts and reminded our American friends and ourselves about these matters, because few people know about them. I think that the Foreign Secretary has put the responsibility in the wrong place. Everything that America sold to us during the last war, from the beginning to the end, this country repaid at the rate of more than 80 per cent. of the total amount, and during the period that America



was supplying us, at high war prices, she was making a very considerable profit which would have wiped out completely the other 20 per cent. Why should we allow these statements to go without correction?

About 18 months ago there appeared a full page advertisement in the "Chicago Tribune" which stated that this country had never repaid either in interest or redemption one single dollar. It is too bad that our information service should allow such statements to pass by. Eighteen months ago our information service in New York took the trouble to have a full investigation and statement made about this, and it is worth while, at this late hour, for Members of this House to look at those figures and remind themselves of the colossal achievement of this country in paying so much as it did, in spite of the fact that no other country paid more than a very small amount of the debts it incurred. I think that it should be made clear in this House that our balance of payment difficulties are due to the fact that this country carried for many years more than its fair burdens.

There is one other thing the Foreign Secretary said to which I wish to refer, namely, this constant appearance of what he called the ugly head of Communism in different parts of the world. He told the House we were doing our best to smash it wherever it appeared, and whenever it showed its ugly head—as he said. Now, it is time this country faced up to the fact that Russia has declared war on democracy throughout the world, and we had better accept the challenge before it is too late. Do the Foreign Secretary's words mean that the Government are determined to outlaw this conspiracy to deprive us of our privileges in this country, our freedom, our free speech and the right to vote? Or are they going to pussyfoot, as they did in regard to a promise made some time ago about those in high positions in the Civil Service?

It is time this country made it perfectly clear that we accept this challenge and from this moment onwards will do everything to meet it in whatever way may be necessary. There can be no doubt at all that to do that means the standing together solidly of the English-speaking peoples, as they have never done before; it means that Anglo-American co-operation has got to be a firm reality. By standing together the English-speaking peoples can declare peace on earth, and no combination of Powers can make war. We have lost a lot of time and many opportunities.

I pointed out in this House some years ago that the only reason the Axis became a menace was because for far too long the British Empire and America were supplying them with raw materials for profit. I raised the matter with the then Prime Minister as strongly as I could; I raised it not once but many times in Questions and in speeches, and the Prime Minister sent his private secretary—now one of the leaders who sits on the Opposition Front Bench—to ask me if I would just keep quiet on that subject for a little while, and that he would place the resources of the Foreign Office at my disposal so that I could see exactly what was being done. I got a tremendous fright when I went to the Foreign Office and saw how little they knew about it. I had to tell them something. I quoted an instance where 4,000 tons of copper had left Canada very late in the day bound for a German port; fortunately it was stopped and went back to Canada. Something very much worse than that is going on today. It is foolish to talk about the danger of war. The war is at its height; the country which successfully wages the ideological war will perhaps not need to fight a military war. Therefore, I hope that the Foreign Secretary, when he made that statement today, meant exactly what he said, and that wherever this thing raises its ugly head it will be treated as it deserves to be treated, as an outlaw, as a criminal—and we must not leave it too late.

The subject on which I really want to address the House for a short time today is the only one for which I believe this Session has been called. I understand that we are meeting here today because the Minister of Health threatened to resign his position unless the Government agreed to nationalise the steel industry. The Government declined to do it, but to appease that Minister they agreed to keep it in the programme, and to put a Bill through this Parliament. In order to keep that pledge to the Minister of Health we are sitting here today, the whole country has been upset, and the whole of Parliament has been dragged here to listen to a 74-word speech. All this as appeasement to the Minister of Health who declared that unless we nationalised the steel industry he would resign. Well, it is all right if the

Government like to do their business in that way, but at some time or other we have to face the facts. The only reason I have heard put forward by my colleagues—and I have discussed it with those willing to discuss it with me—was that it was in the programme in "Let Us Face The Future." I have heard no reasonable justification except that it was in the programme, and that we must implement a pledge which was given in the programme. I believe the country would forgive us for forgetting that one thing if we would only face the facts.

But we were pledged to something very much stronger than that, for in successive years this party has pledged itself that the moment it came to power it would give a National Home to the Jews. It did not implement that pledge, and for reasons good enough for the Government and good enough for me. But it is no good straining at gnats and swallowing camels. We have to make out a case for the nationalisation of steel, even if it be in a dozen books. I could quote almost every authority—every respectable authority—in the Labour Party who writes on Socialism as saying that nationalisation is no longer a Socialist dogma.

A short time ago the Secretary of State for War was nearly hounded out of the party for daring to make a very blunt statement at a meeting in Edinburgh, but he was able to hold up to the National Executive a little pamphlet and to say: "I do not know what the excitement is about; I asked Transport House for a brief, and here is the brief," and he proceeded to read from that official bulletin the very words for the use of which they were threatening to throw him out of the party. Apparently, we still have a sense of humour, because that same gentleman was in the chair sitting in judgment on me when I had the opportunity of saying, "But my difficulty is the same as yours. Here is an official publication preparing the movement for our next election programme"—I am sure every Tory has read it—"and from beginning to end that programme is a plea to the movement not to insist on too much nationalisation." From beginning to end it reiterated the statements I had been making in public speeches to the movement in many parts of the country in the last two years; it almost summarised my speeches, saying in effect, "There are other ways of doing all these things without nationalisation." I think Mr. Cole, who is quite an authority on Socialism, has used those exact words. Although I must not be taken as quoting him, because I could not put my finger on the quotation, I believe he said that nationalisation is no longer necessary to Socialism. I said to my leaders at that time, "The point is that here is a publication repeating my own statements, yet not a man sitting round this table has read it. Thousands and thousands of copies have been distributed throughout the country inviting the movement to adopt the attitude I have been preaching."

It is time we faced the facts when we face the future. What are the benefits to come to the country from the nationalisation of the steel industry? We as politicians must ask ourselves that question, and I say there is nothing to be got under a nationalised industry that cannot be got without nationalisation. The Government's power is absolute; the Government of the day can do what they like. Today, in spite of all the nonsense talked about it, the steel industry cannot fix its own prices, and has not been able to do so for very many years; there could be no more control over the steel industry than there is today. The right hon. Member for the City of London (Sir A. Duncan) said in this House on behalf of the Opposition that they did not ask for controls to be taken away; they accepted controls as necessary, but they could not see any advantage in a change of ownership.

What are the advantages in a change of ownership? The workers have not demanded it. In fact, when the Minister of Health demanded that there should be nationalisation, or else he would resign, the Government said, "But look, even the unions have not demanded it." Within a few weeks after that statement—not before—there were meetings up and down the country demanding the nationalisation of the steel industry. There was a meeting in my own constituency attended by 300 trade unionists. The trades council called that meeting. Never before has a meeting called in Middlesbrough by the trades' council been attended by so many people. Only one man out of that 300 supported me; all the others voted for immediate nationalisation of the steel industry. However, to keep that in perspective it should be noted that the chairman was a Communist, as were the majority in the audience, without whom they would not have had such a large attendance. Similar things have gone on up and down the country.

I notice this morning an announcement that the Sunderland branch of a union of which I happen to be a member has asked for my expulsion. That has become quite a habit. Some months ago, however, I was also asked by a branch in South Wales to say something on this subject. The secretary of the branch had had a lot of complaints from the steel section of the union and asked if I had anything to say. I replied that I had quite a bit to say, but that I should like to say it to them myself, asked him to call a conference and to be sure to get at the meeting all those people who were violently opposed to me. The secretary made the arrangements and assured me that I would be satisfied with the opposition. We set out at that meeting determined fully to discuss the matter. I put the case to them and asked any man present to show me any advantage that would come to the workers of this country through nationalisation which the Government could not give them without nationalisation. Not a man could do so. I invite hon. Members to write to the secretary and ask him about it, and he, as would the chairman, would say that I could have got a vote of confidence from that meeting after the men had heard and faced the facts.

The reason I was stopped talking at meetings of the Labour Movement was because people were impressed with what I was saying, and it was only then that I stopped going to different parts of the country to speak at these conferences. In two successive years at the National Conference I put the facts before the Movement. I ask hon. Members today to answer some of the questions I have put to them. Here we have the steel unions, which have never had a dispute for more than 30 years; the workers are highly paid men and quite satisfied.

Mr. Stokes I understand the hon. Member to say he was stopped speaking to Labour Party meetings. Stopped by whom?

Mr. Edwards There was a time when the hon. Member and I, and other people, were asked to go to district conferences and preach the party gospel. I went, as did others, and very successful conferences they were. I then began to say, "Now be very careful. Do not press the Government to bite off more than they can chew. We are going to do this, that and the other, and if you press them to do more than that, the Government will perhaps have to carry out your wishes, and will probably fail. I want to see them succeed and at the end of five years come back with a majority. If you make them do too much they will be a failure and may not get another chance." Those were my words, and those present were inclined to take my advice. But some extremists wrote to headquarters and said that I was preaching against nationalisation. That is the reason I was, perhaps not stopped, but not invited—put it that way.

What are the benefits which will come to the worker from the nationalisation of steel? Ask the average workman, and you find that he thinks that we are going to take the profits from the so-called parasites and distribute them in some mysterious way among the workers. I put my case to the House, and I invite contradiction. I declare that for every £1 profit made in steel, and in other industries today, no one in business would dare leave less than 5s. in the business; it has to be ploughed back. The remaining 15s. the Chancellor immediately taxes to the extent of 9s.; when we distribute a dividend he takes another 25 per cent., and when we receive our dividend we pay Supertax. I doubt whether the Chancellor receives less than 12s. 6d. of that 15s. Do the workers of this country realise that the Chancellor is getting all the profits?

Mr. Godfrey Nicholson (Farnham) The Chancellor takes another 10 per cent. in the 5s. ploughed back.

Mr. Edwards We take about 10 per cent. of all the wages to send to the Chancellor. In fact, we have become a nation of tax collectors.

I know that my colleagues on the other side of the House have not grasped the facts. [Interruption.] I will call them my "colleagues," and there are still plenty of them left, and they are not on this side of the House. There are very few Members on the Government side who have been as loyal to the party as I have been. I doubt whether anyone has supported the party on more points in our programme than I have. I voted against the party on two things. The first was equal pay for women, which I insisted upon when most of the Members of the party changed their minds on a

famous occasion. We defeated the Government of the day, and when the Prime Minister of the day made his demand, all but twenty-two of us crawled through the Lobby a second time to vote the other way. I am glad that some Members were prepared to stand by their decision. I remember long before some hon. Members opposite were in the House, this subject being raised and the Government of the day being beaten. Yet the majority of Members opposite were willing to go through the Lobby a second time and vote against themselves at the request of the Prime Minister. Members opposite cannot hold it against me that I have not been loyal. The second occasion was in regard to the direction of labour in peace-time. Is any hon. Member opposite going to fire any shots at me for that?

No man can say that whilst I was in the party there was any kind of intrigue, discussions or conversations on this question of anti-nationalisation. It was a one-man campaign. When I was in the party there were never any consultations with this side of the House, and not even with anyone in the steel industry. No leader in the steel industry will get up and say that I had any discussions with him. I took up this attitude because my conscience compelled me to do so.

I repeat my question. What benefits will be given to the country by nationalisation, or what can be done by nationalisation that cannot be done now? The workers will not be getting better conditions, because there has been no dispute for 30 years and there is a sliding-scale to look after their cost of living. Will any Member get up and say what are the advantages? When a trade union leader, who is a very old friend of mine, took up an attitude against me, we pressed him to say what were the advantages, and after some consideration he said that first and foremost when the industry is nationally owned the first charge will be on wages for the men and not on profits for the "bosses." Let us look at the matter from that point of view. He may have meant what he said quite seriously, but he did not know the facts, because wages for the men must be the first charge and have always been the first charge in law. Legally wages are the first charge even over first debenture holders.

What about profit for the "bosses"? Let us assume that the company with which I am associated is bought out. Suppose that £1,000,000 is paid for a steel company. The boss will then get 3 per cent. Government bonds. He will not be risking his capital; he will toil not, neither will he spin. The "bosses" will be drawing their 3 per cent., and if in the next year or so there is a depression, as some people are predicting, and 50 per cent. of my constituents are on the streets again on the dole, what will be the first charge on industry then—the 3 per cent. Government bonds or wages for the men? It is not even good business. They have not thought these things out. These boys from the London School of Economics should be sent into the workshops. Put them there for a few years and let them earn a living. There is not a man in the Government who has had to earn his living running a business. There is not a man in the Government who knows what a profit and loss account is. That is my personal experience. Tell me of a man who has run a business. I am quite willing to know of one because I have been looking for one myself. There are some good business men in the Labour Party. There is my hon. Friend the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes), who is a very successful business man indeed, and there are others, but they are not in the Government.

Lastly, what are the advantages which are to come from nationalisation? I was in Czechoslovakia last November, and I was talking with Socialist statesmen who started nationalisation there and three months later were thrown out by the Communists without even an election. The workers have lost their freedom and are working longer hours on a lower standard of living. What would these men give for another chance to save themselves and their country? But they have not got another chance. We still have the privilege and the opportunity to turn down this thing which has no reason but is a mere dogma which happens to have been thrown in at the last moment, as I happen to know, something which just had the luck of the draw. There is nothing which cannot be done just as well after the next election, and let it be remembered that it must be an election issue, because nationalisation of the industry cannot come into operation until after the election.

How much wiser it would have been to have left the matter open? The Lord President of the Council has said that the Government have done more in two years than the Tories did in 20 years, and only a glutton would want to do more. Let it be an election issue, and if there is a mandate for it we will accept it. I say to Members opposite who have been a little intolerant that I do not think they have studied the case against nationalisation. I know that there are a good many Members in the party who are not happy about it, and I ask Members to think a little more seriously on this subject and the damage which might be done to the country.

5.37 p.m.

Mr. Stokes (Ipswich) It is pure chance that I, as a so-called business man, find myself following my hon. Friend the Member for East Middlesbrough (Mr. A. Edwards). Most of what I want to say relates to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden), but in view of what has been said I think I must say something at the commencement about the steel situation.

I find myself in this position. I have always believed, and still believe, that the proper nationalisation of the basic iron and steel trade would be to the benefit of the workers of the world as a whole. I think that that would be particularly so if some arrangements could be arrived at whereby there was international control of iron and steel at the same time. Having said that—and to that extent I disagree with my hon. Friend—I qualify it by saying that while I still desire to see that happen and still believe it would be of benefit, I agree with my hon. Friend to the extent that I am not at all certain that the moment is now.

There is no more glaring example than that of Richard Thomas and Baldwins, Ltd., that great show in Ebbw Vale. What happened with reorganisation in that case? Did prices go down? Not on your life. In spite of the fact that the management wanted to bring prices down and give users cheaper steel, they were prevented from doing so in order that the larger proportion of the "swag" they were making should be used to support the less efficient sections of the industry. That is an argument in favour of reorganising the whole of the industry for the benefit of the workers. There is an enormous amount which could be done to give us better and cheaper steel.

As I said, I am not at all certain that the time is now, and I say that for this reason. We have all seen what has happened inside industry as a result of overcentralisation of control. If nationalisation of the steel industry is to be carried out, and I hope it will be—when it should be done is another matter—then it must be done in such a way that the steel industry is run efficiently. I am a manufacturer in the heavy engineering section of the industry, and I find that departmental delays are quite intolerable. I find that for extensions I want to make to premises and for organisation essential to proper planning, the delays in getting sanctions are intolerable. The result is that people put in for much more than they expect to get, which leads to disaster. I got a shock the other day when something I had put in came through unexpectedly after only four months. I did not want to do the job until two years hence, so I put in my application early, thinking that by the time they had "mucked" it about, I should be ready to do the job. That is the sort of thing one is driven to do because of the fear of delays.

The chief fault is with the Tory Party. I am not attacking any member of the Civil Service, but for generations the civil servants have always been taught to find a good reason for doing nothing. There are armies of people in these offices whose one idea is to "pass the buck." There has to be a complete purge of that, and it cannot be done in quick time. The Tories are the people who taught them, because it was the Tories who did not want any changes. From the experience I have had, I still stand for nationalisation and believe it is the right thing to do, but I beg the Government and my colleagues, when they come to tackle the job to do it right, otherwise they may "make a muck of it" for years. I have made my position perfectly clear. I am for nationalisation and I have always been for it, but I want to be sure that we have the best experience available, realising that any mistake at this moment can lead us to a serious economic disaster in the whole of our export organisation.

Mr. A. Edwards My hon. Friend will agree that two "mucks" do not make a right. How can we reconcile the Civil Service being designed to do nothing, with the expectation that we shall get greater efficiency and lower prices? Can my hon. Friend quote any example of an industry being run more cheaply or the prices being lowered?

Mr. Stokes That is not what I came here to do. I did not come here to talk about this subject, but I personally have always believed that there is no excuse for privately-owned monopolies. I regard the basic iron and steel industry as a privately-owned monopoly. If we get the power in the right hands, it ought to be taken over. I do not want any mistakes to happen in taking over. For my part, I believe that if I were given the job I could do it pretty well. But I am not asking for it.

I do not know whether the hon. Member for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) is here, but he did not leave the House quite as quickly as the Foreign Secretary whom he castigated so much for going away. I want to say this in case the hon. Member misunderstood my point. What I was trying to say when the hon. Member chastised the Foreign Secretary for going out of the House was that the Foreign Secretary—I will not say that he is quite as heavily loaded as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) was during the war—is probably carrying a greater burden, and is having a more anxious time, than any other Member of the Government at the moment. I do not suppose that the Foreign Secretary was told several days ago that the Opposition were choosing today to call upon him to make a reply.

My experience is that if the House shows in no uncertain manner that it dislikes a Minister going away, that Minister must stay here and pay attention. There was no expression of that kind from the Opposition Front Bench. If I may refer for one moment to that great secret Debate we had on tanks, during the war, there was an occasion when the House showed in no uncertain manner its view about the Secretary of State for War. An impressive speech was made by a Tory Member in that Debate, after which the Secretary of State for War got up to go to a nonsensical war weapons week in the City, or something of that kind. He was told to come back, and he had to do so and miss his lunch. I am quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington realised today that the Foreign Secretary's burden was heavy. My right hon. Friend made his apologies and went, and I think it was a pity that he should have been castigated on the way out by the hon. Member for Cambridge University.

Mr. Pickthorn That is not quite accurate. The whole House was not here all the time the Foreign Secretary spoke, and the right hon. Gentleman made no kind of explanation before he got up.

Mr. Stokes The moment the hon. Gentleman objected the Foreign Secretary stopped to explain that he had an appointment, and then left. I agree, however, with the hon. Gentleman to this extent; I think this House comes first. I think it is a highly objectionable practice, which was indulged in a great deal in the last Parliament, that people should make their speeches and clear out. It destroys the Debate. I also recognise, though, that the Foreign Secretary today has his special obligations.

I turn now to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington, who expressed his surprise that three or three and a half years after the cessation of hostilities we are still in this awful mess. It is just as much his fault as anybody else's in the world. If we conduct affairs on no principle whatever, even through a great war, we must not be surprised if we find we are in a mess when we get to the end of it. I refer to the abominable conferences which took place at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, where all the devilment was done.

How many more of these half-secret agreements are we going to dig up? We have been assured by the right hon. Gentleman himself and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford that there were no secret agreements, yet coming out in a monthly periodical called "Soundings," is a report by Mr. Mikolajczyk which proves the contrary. It is definitely stated—nobody has contradicted it, and I have called the attention of various "high-ups" to these articles—that when Mr. Mikolajczyk was called to Moscow, in 1944, he was told that it was no use arguing about the eastern

frontiers of Poland because the three witches of Teheran had already settled that issue, and there was nothing to discuss. We were not told about that at the time. I think the Teheran Conference was in 1943. That was a deliberate destruction of the Atlantic Charter. I said so at the time, but nobody would take any notice—nobody would pay any attention to those who saw a little further than their noses—and I am surprised that the right hon. Gentleman should be surprised that things are in such a mess when affairs were conducted on such unprincipled lines.

Unconditional surrender too was an idiotic procedure. Nobody but a lunatic would put forth such a war cry as that. I tremble to think by how much it lengthened the war, but no doubt we shall find out one day. Where are we with the economic situation in Germany? What happened? There was indiscriminate bombing. Some of us said, "This is a wrong thing to do. We shall never achieve a right by doing a wrong." But nobody took any notice. When all that is summed up, and with other things as well, can we be surprised that things are in the mess they are? May I point out to the right hon. Gentleman opposite that the Russians were cunning about indiscriminate bombing. So far as I know, they did not bomb the back areas at all. That was one of the most stupid policies we ever indulged in.

The right hon. Gentleman talked about the upset in Malaya at present. We all agree that it is deplorable, but perhaps the situation would be quite different had we been more forthright in our declaration as to what we would do when we recaptured Malaya. I remember making, in Cairo, what came to be a famous speech, and one of the things I said to the troops there was that I was not very much interested in the recapture of Malaya from the Japanese if all we were going to do was to hand it over to the monopoly control of tin and rubber of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot (Mr. Lyttelton) and his gang. That did not go down very well. It went down pretty well over there, but there were some ugly rumblings on this side.

*Mr. Godfrey Nicholson* Very patriotic.

*Brigadier Head (Carshalton)* If the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) is proud of having said that to the troops during the war, was it not a curious line of argument if they have to go there now?

*Mr. Stokes* If the hon. and gallant Member would like me to do so, I will repeat the whole of the speech now. It took about an hour and a quarter. I am dealing with only one aspect of it. I was trying to explain that all raw materials must be made available to the people of the world as a whole, and not won back at the cost of blood simply to be handed back to monopoly control. I did not say anything objectionable—

*Mr. Nigel Birch (Flint)* Very silly.

*Mr. Gammans (Hornsey)* I am sure the hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) would not like to mislead the House about rubber, but is he aware that over 50 per cent. of rubber production in Malaya is in native hands?

*Mr. Stokes* I was thinking particularly of tin. So far as I know, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Aldershot has nothing to do with rubber [HON. MEMBERS: "You said so."] I was wrong; I meant tin.

*Mr. Gammans* Well, then, on tin—

*Mr. Stokes* Does not the hon. Member, who seems to know so much about Malaya, know very well that more than a year after the war started the production of tin in the Malay Peninsula was artificially restricted in order to keep prices up?

*Mr. Gammans* Is the hon. Gentleman aware that over 40 per cent. of the production of tin is in Chinese hands?

*Mr. Stokes* That may be, but its distribution is by international cartel, and its price is so controlled. After the war I had requests from the British tin organisation in Malaya asking me to make representations. It was like trying to get the

Crown jewels out of the Tower of London.

Mr. Birch The important thing is what is going on now.

Mr. Stokes The hon. Gentleman need not be impatient. The House does not rise until 10.30, and I propose to continue. I did not get up for his amusement; I got up to say what I wanted to say about the present situation, and I propose to do so. If he does not like to listen, he can go out.

There is one other thing I wish to say before I leave general foreign policy and get on to some of the villainies which are still extant. In Egypt we have people who really are friendly to us, and who want to be friends. Nowhere in the world is there greater disparity between great riches and great poverty. India is a paradise by comparison. What I want to ask is why do we go on backing the wrong people? So far as I understand Egypt—and I have been there quite a lot—we are still backing the Pashas and rich families. I think it time there was a change of Government in Egypt and Nahas Pasha was brought back into power again. I think it is vital that there should be a change now, because such a change is long overdue. I hope my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will convey that expression to the Foreign Secretary.

Now I come to some of the villainies, one of which was mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington—the question of the trial of the German generals. It is an absolute outrage to our sense of decency and fair play. The story, so far as I can piece it together, is this—and perhaps I may be told whether I am right. Some time ago, two years ago, I believe, the Lord Chancellor was asked his opinion as to whether the senior ranking generals should stand trial or not. He said he thought they ought—whether it was for war crimes or crimes against humanity I do not know. The War Office thought it inconvenient and unusual to "muck about" with generals, and they put that minute into a pigeonhole, and let it get musty.

Then agitation to return war prisoners got going. I had something to do with that. In consequence, at the beginning of this year the War Office found the minute on which no action had been taken and thought of a plan. They thought the generals ought to be medically examined. The doctors decided that the generals were old, decrepit, and unfit to stand a trial of the proposed magnitude. Whether that was reported to the Cabinet or not, I do not know. I have not the inside information that my hon. Friend the Member for East Middlesbrough has about what goes on at Cabinet meetings. But there certainly seems to have been a recalcitrant movement in or about the Cabinet, which thought that this was the international trade union of generals at work. The high-ranking generals must be tried. How absurd it was for War Office doctors to examine generals. The doctors ought to be civilians. After months of delay the Home Secretary sent along his doctors. They reported that the generals were quite fit to stand trial. A noted wit of the House, who shall be nameless, said to me when I told him the story, "Yes, Dick, and if the doctors had been from the Ministry of Labour they would have come back and said that they were fit for national service." [Laughter.] That sounds funny, but it is the sort of thing that happens.

What I find intolerable is that these old generals should be put on the rack at this stage. If they were to have been tried they ought to have been tried at once, although I disagree that generals should be tried at all because military people simply carry out the policies of politicians. If it were a case of trying the people who let off the atomic bomb—I do not mean those who dropped it—I agree. To say it was the chap who flew over Nagasaki is ridiculous. It is the high-ranking top politicians who ought to be tried. We have not tried them, and, so far, we do not propose to do so. I would try the persons responsible for indiscriminate bombing. I think they committed a much greater crime than any German general. I do not wish to mince matters about this. I hope public opinion and opinion in this House will be sufficiently strong to have this trial stopped. It is absolutely indecent and contrary to all the traditions of this country.

The second villainy is with regard to the Yugoslavs. Since the House rose, I went unexpectedly to the Continent and saw six Yugoslavs who were being returned, in my view as an appeasement to Tito. I am not going to bore the House



by telling the whole story, but these wretched chaps were in our hands in displaced persons' camps or in prisons for two years or more. I had a categorical undertaking from the Foreign Secretary that they would not be put into the cart and carted off to be killed, nor sent back at short notice. They were to be given plenty of time to know what was coming to them. Judge of my surprise, therefore, when on arrival at this prison in Germany, I was informed that they had been told that morning at 11 o'clock that they were to go back the next morning at 8 o'clock, after being in our hands for 2½ years, and that they were being sent back without any possibility of getting any help from anyone.

They were confined in individual cells in the German prison. I will not describe the scenes that took place. They took years off my life. They were supposed to be collaborators. With whom? Before the war Yugoslavia was always divided into about 15 different sects, each warring with one another. That we should have kept these chaps in security for 2½ years and then suddenly bung them into other hands is absolutely outrageous. The fact that the Foreign Office says there are only 19 more to go is absolutely no consolation to me. I say that this action of the Foreign Office is absolutely contrary to the traditions of this country and it should not have been done.

I do not expect the third villainy to produce any popular re-echo either in this House or in the country. I want, however, to refer to the seven top Nazis in Spandau prison in Berlin. They include Hess, von Neurath, and some others. They are housed in an enormous prison and there is nobody else in that prison at all except the guards. It is under quadripartite control, but the prison is in the British sector of Berlin. The House has got to be clear in the matter: it is admitted by the highest ranking people in Germany that these people are being deliberately starved to death—not by us. The system is this: there is quadripartite control, and each authority takes it month by month to guard the prison—first, the Americans, then us, then the Russians, and then the French. These prisoners get a very low ration, about 1,100 calories, which is something over one-third of our legitimate ration. They are not allowed food parcels.

When we are on duty they get their rations, as they also do when the Americans are on duty, but when the other two are on duty they do not. They are being deliberately starved to death. I put in two applications for permission to see them, but I was refused. While I do not particularly want to see them, that is the best way of verifying the facts. These men are in prison in our sector. The sentence at Nuremberg was not that they should be put into prison and starved to death. It was that they were to serve a sentence imposed by the court and they were to get out at the end of their period of imprisonment. It is absolutely outrageous that this is allowed to go on, and it will have the worst political repercussions if these men die while they are in our hands.

The fourth villainy to which I should like to refer is an old theme with me—the case of Mrs. Chatterton-Hill. Her husband was allowed to die by the deliberate neglect of the officials of the Control Commission in Germany. That is what happened in my opinion from the facts as I know them, and the people responsible ought to be tried for manslaughter. Nothing has been done about it. These are British people. The old man is dead now, and the old woman has been brought over here and put in a Ministry of Health hostel. What ought we to do? All I can get out of the Treasury and the Foreign Office is a paltry 35s. a week, which she will have to pay over immediately for any lodgings which she may get anywhere. She has no means of support whatsoever. The Foreign Office insist that this case is exactly the same as that of a widow who loses her husband during the war. I say that it is nothing of the kind. Here is an old woman whose husband was done to death by the neglect of the Control Commission in Germany, and the least that we could do for the old lady now would be to pay her about £3 per week and let her eke out her existence with it instead of keeping her bottled up in a hostel. If she leaves that hostel now she will suffer the greatest penury.

I leave my remarks on villainies with a quotation from Chapter 136 of Book VII of Herodotus, which someone sent to me. The Lacedaemonians had basely killed some Persian heralds. Two Lacedaemonians put themselves into the hands of the Persians by way of atonement, expecting to be killed, but “Xerxes answered with true greatness of soul that he would not act like the Lacedaemonians, who, by killing the heralds, had broken the laws which all men hold in

common. As he had blamed such conduct in them, he would never be guilty of it himself. And besides, he did not wish, by putting the two men to death, to free the Lacedaemonians from the stain of their former outrage." I quote that because so many people say to me, "That is the kind of thing the Germans would have done to us." I say that that is no argument at all, and I am sure the House will agree that this quotation is pertinent to the question.

I turn for a few brief moments to the economic situation about which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington spoke when he opened this Debate. First, I want to say to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this nation at the present time is being overtaxed to the extent that taxation now is causing inflation in itself. It is quite time that we were relieved of some of the burden, both of direct and indirect taxation, which I believe is far greater than we can comfortably carry. I hope my right hon. and learned Friend will bear that in mind during the many sleepless nights he spends when preparing his Budget.

The second thing I wish to say is that I do not think enough emphasis or analysis is given to this question of absenteeism. I do not wish to attack particular trades, because I do not know enough about them, but some explanation ought to be forthcoming. I find when I talk to the working men—and I talk to quite a few of them—that they want definite information on this matter. In the works that I control in Ipswich, voluntary absenteeism for the last six months averaged .3 of one per cent. I do not believe it can be got any lower than that. These workmen say to me "Why is it that the miners' voluntary absenteeism is 8.6 per cent?" [HON. MEMBERS: "It is hard work."] So is mine. I would not mind if it were five per cent., but why is it as high as it is? It is fair to all the workers that this should be explained to them. It is no use my belly-aching workers to cut down the .3 of one per cent. to .2 if I cannot explain to them why the miners have such a high figure. I do not know the explanation, nor will I attempt any criticism. I do not know enough about the mining industry to form a considered opinion, but I think it ought to be put straight so that the workers themselves will understand it.

Thirdly, there is the question of profits, about which I made a speech on the Adjournment some time ago. The wrong emphasis is laid here. It is quite silly for Ministers to say that profits are shooting up because they are double what they were before the war. A business today is badly managed if it is not making twice as much as before the war. It is absolutely necessary that there should be profits in industry and that they should be increased. The price of all the commodities to industry has increased. Machine tools today cost more and so does everything else. I am one with the people who say that we should not increase dividends, but it is nonsense to mislead the workers by telling them that because profits are double what they were before the war, they are excessive. It simply is not true. I would myself kick out any managing director who was not making twice as much in the same organisation as in pre-war days.

Fourthly, I should like to see what I would call a more negative direction of labour—and when I have dealt with this subject I shall be finished. What I mean by that is that I dislike positive direction of labour. I dislike people being told to go here and there and everywhere. We would get much better results from our labour force if the Government gave direction to certain employers as to the limit of the labour they themselves could employ. There is a tremendous leakage to the unessential industries, especially in my trade. People go into such businesses as roadside garages. I do not say that roadside garages should not have their engineers, but the proprietor should not be allowed to employ more than one or two instead of seven or eight. In our organisation in the eastern counties we have never been able to meet our full requirements of skilled and semi-skilled men and it is because people leave the organisation for other work. I do not blame them, but the situation being what it is, instead of directing labour the Government ought to engage to a greater degree in negative direction.

With these few remarks I have finished; but I should like to say that I believe the Government are doing a good job, and unlike my hon. Friend the Member for East Middlesbrough I do not think the nationalisation of steel will make the slightest difficulty. I am confident that when the Labour Government again go to the country at the next election, they will be returned to power.

6.12 p.m.

Mr. Gallacher (Fife, West) We are here as representatives of the people of this country and never was there a time when our services, if we are loyal, were more needed than at the present time. Yet we are here gathered to deal with such a triviality as the cutting down of the veto of the Lords. Why did not the Government make one bite of the cherry and wipe the Lords out altogether? More important still, why should we not be here discussing food prices, rents—there is trouble all over the country just now about rents and the threatened increases—wages and the cutting down of profits? It is quite possible to cut down profits and ensure that new machinery is provided for the rehabilitation of our factories. During the past century and the first half of this century enormous profits were being made, but were they used to rehabilitate the industries or for building up and re-constructing those industries so that they would be more proficient? The hon. Gentleman the Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) cannot "kid" us that the employers concerned were using profits in that way.

Mr. Stokes I was not talking about what happened in the last century but what is to happen now.

Mr. Gallacher I am talking about the last century and the first half of this century. We are faced with the situation that when we take over an industry it is semi-bankrupt so far as equipment is concerned. Were the profits made put back into the mining or steel industries? No, they certainly were not. We should certainly cut down profits. Instead of dealing with this, the Leader of the House yesterday, at the conclusion of his speech, told us that we were going to retain men in the Armed Forces who should be demobilised and that we should engage in a great new expenditure on armaments of all kinds. The reason we are told is because of a crisis. What has caused the crisis? I assert here, as I have done on many occasions, that the crisis is caused by monopoly capitalism in America in its desperate desire for markets and for profitable fields for investment. There is not a Socialist on the Government Front Bench or a Socialist on these benches either who has not time and again impressed on the workers that capitalism in its greed for markets is responsible for war.

A month or two ago an American publicist, Johannes Steel, who issues a monthly information bulletin, had an interview with George Bernard Shaw. In the course of the interview he asked Shaw; "What do you think of Dewey?" George Bernard Shaw said, "I do not think of Dewey." Then he went on to say, "Tell the American people that Wallace is the man they should support. Please tell them that from me. He is the man who stands for peace and progress for the people of America." What does Wallace say? I want to put this point to every Member of Parliament, whether on a front bench or a back bench, as a challenge.

We are in much too serious a position to contemplate a continuation of this alliance between the so-called Socialist Government and the most ruthless capitalism that the world has ever known, the monopoly capitalism of America. I would call attention particularly to what Wallace has said about the arrest of the Communist leaders in America: "It is interesting and highly significant that these reds scares over the past two or three years have been timed to silence opposition to new turns in the Republican and Democratic get-tough foreign policy. Millions of Americans have indicated their displeasure of the refusal of the bipartisans to enter into real negotiations with the Russians, looking to a peaceful settlement of existing difference." "The indictments are, I feel, an attempt to promote new fears. They are another in a series of diversions created for Americans who are complaining about the mounting inflation, the stupid bungling in Berlin, and other problems. Both the Administration and the bipartisans in Congress made allegations to make headlines, make headlines to make fear, and make fear to stay in power. ... While I favour strong action against any individual who commits violence, it has been my observation that violence in the United States, as indeed in other countries, has been generally committed by the very people who would suppress the free speech of Communists and other groups with whom they disagree. ..." "Defence of the civil rights of Communists is the first line in the defence of the liberties of a democratic people. The history of Germany, Italy, Japan and Franco Spain should teach us that the suppression of the Communists is but the first step in an assault on the democratic rights of labour, national, racial,

and political minorities, and all those who oppose the policies of the Government in power." I would just add a very brief reference to the Convention of the New Party in America which was held a month or two ago. In dealing with the question of danger to world peace and to the American people the Convention declared: "The root cause of this crisis is big-business control of our economy and government. With toil and enterprise the American people have created from their rich resources the world's greatest productive machine. This machine no longer belongs to the people." Then they paraphrase the words of the right hon. Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) and say: "Never before have so few owned so much at the expense of so many." The democratic and progressive forces in America have no doubt whatever that the cause of the crisis and the threat to world peace comes from the monopoly capitalists of America.

The Leader of the House wrote many things during the first world war, some of which have been quoted at different times in this House. On one occasion he wrote: "Go to war little soldier, your King and Country need you. Go and kill your German brother. The parson says, 'Thou shall not kill,' but don't listen to him. Your masters will tell you: 'If you don't kill the Germans they will kill you.'" That was his attitude during the first world war when he was of military age. There was no question of fighting for British capitalism. He was against it and he was advising all young men against fighting for British capitalism. Now he wants to mobilise the youth of this country to fight for American Capitalism. Surely, that is an almost unbelievable policy for a Government that calls itself Socialist.

The Leader of the Opposition has talked about a million and a half unemployed if we did not get Marshall Aid. He quoted some leader of the Labour Party as having said so. There is no reason whatever for such a thing. The Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe could keep our factories going for generations and could supply us with goods in return. [Laughter.] Hon. Members may laugh: of course, they could. The Americans will never keep our factories going. They want to sell us goods and not to buy goods from us. Marshall Aid is not to help the British people or the people of Western Europe. Anybody who has any sense knows that Marshall Aid is to keep the bourgeoisie of Europe on their feet and to keep the workers of Britain on their knees.

Just imagine a Labour Party Conference bringing on Comrade Marshall, a representative of the monopoly capitalism of America, and telling the workers at that Conference: "Here is the man who is going to save us. Here is our friend and saviour." I can just imagine Marshall and other people like Dulles, Vandenberg, the Rockefellers, the Morgans, and the Du Ponts, big bankers and monopolists, gathered around Arthur Deakin at the Trade Union Congress, and Arthur Deakin saying, "Here are the boys that are looking after you." Deakin is indignant with the Russians because they will not accept those fellows as the friends of the working class or of Socialism. I do not think it would be possible, if we had those people arrayed together on a Labour Party or a Trade Union Congress platform, to persuade the workers that they were the people who would help the workers. Marshall is a Tory capitalist. [Interruption.] Does anyone deny that Marshall is a Tory, and that all of them are Tories? They have no interest in the working class or in Socialism. They are enemies of the workers and enemies of Socialism. The sooner that hon. Members on this side understand that fact the better.

We had a reference yesterday from the Front Bench on the other side, to some selections made in the Press the other day from a book that was published dealing with the Labour leaders and the Cabinet. In one of those selections we were told that the Foreign Secretary is "brutal and domineering, but he has a great spirit." What sort of thing is that to say about anybody? If a man is brutal and domineering it is over those who are in his view, weaker than he is himself, and it is a compensation for belly-crawling to those who are, he thinks, stronger than himself. No man who has a proper regard and respect for himself or his fellows is brutal and domineering.

I challenge anyone in this House to show me where the Foreign Secretary has ever been brutal and domineering in his relations to the Tories of America, to show me one instance where he has spoken harshly to them. He has never done anything of that kind. [An HON. MEMBER: "Palestine."] That is one thing he has avoided, saying anything about

Palestine. I would very much like to hear him talk about Palestine. Has he been ready at all times in his dealings with America to put forward in the interests of the people a Socialist policy of peace, progress and prosperity? Here we are, with all the problems that are confronting our people, and we are to go in for further expenditure on militarism, directed or driven to it, by American capitalism. [An HON. MEMBER: "And Russia."]

We have the situation in Greece. In 1946, the Foreign Secretary said, at that Box, that in a very few months the soldiers would be out of Greece, but they are not out of Greece yet. It is high time that they were out of Greece. We require in this country hospitals, schools, health centres and many more amenities for the people. We are short of manpower and of all kinds of necessary materials, but we have an army in Greece. What is it doing? It is there to maintain a gang of Royalists and Fascists who would never last for a day if the British troops were withdrawn. Every Member on this side of the House knows that is true. The British Army there has maintained this Royalist group in power.

We have the situation in Malaya. We heard some most amazing stories of what has happened in Malaya. There is the suggestion of a widespread, well-organised campaign going on. I will agree that there is a widespread campaign going on, whether it is well-organised or not, but not from the Communist side; from the side of the capitalist class of this country and America, deliberately driving towards beating down the working class and using, in the first instance, an attack against the Communists. It is going on all over the world. We have the situation in France. Why is there so much pressure from this country and America to prevent a Government that represents the masses of the people being formed in France? Because if the Socialists and Communists were to come together, the situation in France would be solved in a very short time for the people of France. Instead of that, Marshall and Hoffmann—another good comrade representing big monopoly capitalism—are working all the time for General De Gaulle. They hope that he will make a vicious attack on the Communists. If the Communists defend themselves, then it will be the Communists who are wrong.

Take the case of Malaya. I remember some of the Malaysians who were over here at the beginning of last year. They told me the problems confronting them and the people of Malaya. They were very anxious to have an understanding with the authorities on a line of policy for reconstruction in Malaya. They said they found it very difficult—actually impossible—to get any approach to the Governor-General. All the official obstacles were put in the way. They asked me to write to the Governor-General and put before him their proposals for the reconstruction of Malaya and the development of democratic and social life. I wrote to the Governor-General and the letter is on record. Instead of being received and opportunities being provided for discussion, the Malayan Communists were made the subject of a most vicious attack. The Foreign Secretary tells us that all that is going on is the result of Marxist-Lenin teaching. Is there an hon. Member on this side of the House who is prepared to say that if Marx and Lenin had not lived those people in the Far East would not have demanded and fought for their independence? Marx and Lenin had a method. The Foreign Secretary said that the teaching of Marx and Lenin has its effect in the East but he does not seem to understand their teaching, because he went on to talk about organised murder as if the social revolutionaries of Russia believed in organised murder or organised assassination. Lenin, has written very clearly and very strongly some of his finest expressions of theory on this subject, wherein he makes it clear that the last thing revolutionary workers can ever participate in is political assassination. Nothing is more calculated to destroy the possibility of organised working-class activity than political assassination. If the teaching of Lenin and Marx has been circulated in the Colonies, it is certainly not a teaching which has ever given countenance to organised murder.

The Foreign Secretary also said that as a result of the negotiations with the Western European countries Sir Oliver Franks had made a report and that that report represented the greatest measure of co-operation Europe had ever known. I have never listened to such utter nonsense. A month or so ago the President of the Board of Trade was complaining to the French Ambassador that France was refusing licences for British goods and was now using

American aid to buy goods from America. Anyone who so wishes can read what the President of the Board of Trade had to say about what was happening in France. There is no evidence anywhere of economic co-operation.

However, if we seek an example of economic co-operation, we can take what happened the other week between Czechoslovakia and Poland. There is an example of economic co-operation where they have a planned economy in the respective countries and are fitting their economies into each other's in the most effective manner. It has been decided that Czechoslovakia will build certain factories in Poland for Poland and Czechoslovakia will produce certain goods for Poland and Poland will produce certain goods for Czechoslovakia. Poland and Czechoslovakia together will build a railway running right through to Stettin—I cannot remember the new Polish name—from Czechoslovakia. That is one of the most amazing and admirable examples of planned economy and planned co-operation that it is possible to conceive.

I was in Czechoslovakia and Hungary during the past three weeks and I found the people there have their minds concentrated on the task of reconstruction, which is a terrific job. They have taken over the land and are dividing it among the peasants. There are no landlords left in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. The lads of the Opposition do not like the tone of that. The big industries have been taken over and nationalised. I talked to the workers and they thought we were crazy when they heard that the former mineowners are as well off as or better off today than when they still owned their semi-bankrupt properties and that the railway shareholders are as well off or better off than before. Take Tillings. Their shares have gone away up since nationalisation because of the money they would get, and the people out there cannot understand it.

I visited the health resorts at Lake Balaton and I found that all the places which formerly belonged to the bourgeoisie now belong to the trade unions. The miners own an hotel on the hillside which is easily the best in Europe; there is nothing to compare with it anywhere. Hon. Members ought to have heard them laugh when I asked them if they had paid a fair price for it. They told me, "Those fellows robbed us long enough; we have simply stopped the robbery."

Those people are working for reconstruction and they have never a thought for war and there is never any talk about war. The only Czechoslovakians or Hungarians or others who talk about war are those who have been dispossessed and have found their way over to this country. A big notice should be put on the white cliffs of Dover, "Free dump for all East European rubbish." Those people who steal a plane are sure of a safe landing and a hearty welcome here. The workers out there do not want war; they want peace. I am quite certain that, with peace, in five years, or at the most ten years, they will have made their countries real, prosperous Socialist countries and countries of which the people can be really proud.

Mr. McAllister (Rutherglen). Will the hon. Member recall that Marx and Lenin also received the welcome and hospitality of this great freedom-loving country?

Mr. Gallacher But Marx and Lenin would not receive a welcome in this freedom-loving country today. Marx and Lenin would not receive a visa for America. America imposes on this country the same conditions which apply over there. Any Fascist from Eastern or Western Europe can come in here, but let the Communists try to come in. The times have changed from the healthy days of capitalism when it felt it was master of the world. Now capitalism is decrepit. It is on crutches, American dollar crutches, and because it is on crutches it so fears what may happen if the working classes arise that every conception of liberty which obtained in the days to which the hon. Member referred are being shut down.

I want to make reference to the remarks of the senior Burgess for Cambridge University (Mr. Pickthorn) and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden). They talked to us about our interests in Malaya. How does that sound in the ears of Labour Members of Parliament? Where is there a Labour Member of Parliament who has not, time and again, sneered at that phrase when it was used by the Tories? Where is there a

Labour Member of Parliament who has not told the workers, and told them truly, that it was not their interests which were at stake in the Colonies but the interests of the monopolists, the robbers and the ruling classes? How is it that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition can tell us that we used to get 240 million dollars from Malaya? What did the Malaysans get? Did he tell us what they get? Every member of the Labour Party has in the past courageously faced this question of Empire and of who was interested in getting profits out of Colonial territory. Who is getting profits out of tin and rubber in Malaya? Not the Malayan people. I say here that the Malayan people are as much entitled to fight for freedom and independence and the ownership of their industries as the people of this country are. How can the Labour Party claim the right to take over the steel industry and other industries in the name of the people and deny the people in Malaya the right to do the same on their own behalf?

I appeal to Labour Members of Parliament and I appeal to the Members of the Government, some of whom are old colleagues of mine. I remember the days when the Foreign Secretary was a Left-Winger and a Marxist. I remember, and I want the Government and the Labour Party to remember, the pledges they have given, and to stand solid for freedom for the Colonial people, and not death for the Colonial people, and above all to have concern for the people of this country. I say to the Leader of the House and to the other Members of the Government, cut down the Armed Forces, cut down profits, reduce prices and rents, and give the best available to the workers. That is the policy which should be followed by those who are faithful to the people. They should end dependence on America. I tell the Leader of the House and others that Britain can never get out of the crisis whilst she is dependent on America. I challenge any of them to show the people of this country how it will ever be possible to balance our trade and get out of the crisis while we are taking goods from America and America refuses to take goods from us. We should end the dependence on America and build up friendship and trade with the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe. That way is the way of economic independence for Britain. It is the way of prosperity for the British people.

6.44 p.m.

Mr. Raikes (Liverpool, Wavertree) I am always glad to follow the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher). I have never yet agreed with anything he has said and I confess that my record has not been broken this afternoon. You, Mr. Speaker, have certainly heard a remarkable speech. The House has been told that the cause of the economic crisis today is American capitalism and that the object of Marshall Aid is to keep up the bourgeoisie and keep down the working classes in slavery. Anybody who could believe that could believe anything. In fact, if Marshall Aid were to stop tomorrow and we had an extra 1,500,000 people on the streets, this Government would be broken within three months. It could not stand two million unemployed as well as all the other privations. Whatever Marshall Aid may be doing to give a breathing space to our nation—and we need a breathing space—it is disguising the economic crisis and it is the best friend this Government has at the present time.

I want to say a word or two on foreign affairs. One reference I must make to an observation passed by the right hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes). He gave a lecture upon the discourtesy which various hon. Members have shown by no longer sitting in the House after having spoken themselves. It was curious that he could not stay to listen to the remarkable oration which followed, and to which we have just been listening with so much interest. He said that the reason we have these difficulties in foreign affairs is due to the muddle that was handed down by the late Foreign Secretary and by the Conservatives in the last Parliament. He then made references to Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. It will be within the recollection of the House that, rightly or wrongly, I was one of those who opposed certain aspects of the Treaty of Yalta because, in my view, that treaty, in the form in which it was made, was appeasing Russia at the expense of another country and would not lead to world settlement. However, whether I was right or wrong it is a fact that when the vote was taken in the House not one Member of the Socialist Party—and they were part of the Coalition—apart from the hon. Member for Ipswich, went into that Lobby, and the burden of criticising Yalta, with which he made so much play, was a burden cast upon 25 Conservatives who are not ashamed of what they did at that time.

Passing from that, I was a little depressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary. I did not think that he was at the top of his form, but he did coin one remarkable new phrase in foreign diplomacy. He said, "We run like hell under a threat." If words mean anything, he may have been describing what his own Government do, and if that is so, it was rather unkind to say so, but I am prepared to assume that that was not really what he meant. However, he referred just previously to that to Burma, and he said, "The trouble in Burma at the present time, in our view, is not due to the fact in any way that the British left Burma at the end of the war." It is true that we did run out of Burma without a threat, but we left the Karens, who had been our most loyal supporters in Burma, facing a deadly threat, and the trouble in Burma today is due to the fact that the Karens have come forward to safeguard their own position in view of the way in which they were left by us. If that be so, the Burmese situation undoubtedly must have been left as a legacy from what was done a year or so ago.

I want to turn for a moment to the broad aspects of foreign affairs. Again, the Foreign Secretary was rather ungenerous to my right hon. Friend the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) in what he said regarding demobilisation. It is quite true that on these benches we urged rapid demobilisation at the end of the war, but our target left far more in numbers than there are in the Armed Forces at the present time. Our claim was—do it quickly, do it efficiently, and then stop. The trouble in Europe is due to the fact, not that my right hon. Friend favoured reasonable demobilisation after the war, but to the fact—and the Foreign Secretary knows it as well as I do—that in 1945 this country was told on every Socialist platform that the only people who could make peace, and a lasting peace, were the Soviet Socialist Republics of Russia. They came in in that belief and, of course, holding that belief they were not alarmed at any threat in Europe.

There were others who were more farsighted. As far back as 1946 my right hon. Friend, in his Fulton speech, gave a warning as to what a Russian threat might mean and would mean. He was denounced as a warmonger, not by the Foreign Secretary, but all over the country from every Socialist platform. If those warnings had been understood in those days the danger today might be far less than it is. One of the tragedies of war propaganda lies in this—and this we have to face—that in war propaganda if anyone becomes your ally during the war, that particular country, whatever its virtues or failings may be, is at once imbued with every virtue and every noble aspiration that the most high-minded Englishman would like to find in his dearest friend. Unfortunately, when the war is over, that sometimes leads to rather awkward misunderstandings. Indeed, it has taken three years at least for the Government and those who support the Government in the country—those who still support them, not so many as there were—to realise the truth which was spoken by Conservatives in 1945 and 1946. Now we have this difficulty lying before us.

I would say, in passing, that there has been another error. I think the fundamental error made by the Foreign Secretary—who, in many ways, has been courageous in his attitude, particularly with the benches behind him—had lain in this: he realised quicker than many on his benches that the Soviet was not an appeasable enemy, but he believed—I dare say he still believes—that the only way in which to get an anti-Communist front in Europe is to form a front of the Socialist Parties of Continental Europe. If ever there was an error, it is that. There are many Socialists on the Continent of Europe who have played a gallant and courageous part in fighting against tyranny, whether it be Fascist or Communist, but in practically every Socialist Party in Europe there has been a large fifth column of fellow-travellers. In Italy, in France, in Czechoslovakia they played their part. Merely to rely on European Socialism as a defence against Communism is not only folly but sheer madness.

Mr. Cluse (Islington, South) I want to ask whether the hon. Member can give any evidence that the Foreign Secretary has ever put forward a policy that we must have a Socialist Europe before we can unite, or that it is part and parcel of the Labour Party's policy at the present time?

Mr. Raikes It has been emphasised by the Government, both in regard to Germany and Europe, that a Europe of Socialist governments is the greatest safeguard against Communism. The whole policy has been built on that. I am not saying that the right hon. Gentleman has gone to the extent of saying that no others may take part in forming a front



against Communism in Europe; of course he has not; but the basis has been that Socialism is the best defence against Communism, and whatever may be the case in this country—and it is not true in this country—in Europe it is ludicrous to adopt such a policy. We need the support of all freedom-loving peoples on the Continent of Europe, whether they be Conservative, Democratic, Liberal, Socialist. If Europe is to be saved from a greater tyranny maybe than even the tyranny of Hitler—

Mr. Bevin I am sorry to interrupt, but is the hon. Member accusing me of quoting any policy at all in connection with Western Europe? I do not remember that I have ever done so.

Mr. Raikes I am not accusing the right hon. Gentleman of any specific quotation but his policy, and all the propaganda of his party during the last two years and more, has been on this basis: Social Democracy is the greatest safeguard against Communism. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Exactly—Socialist Parties in Europe are our main safeguard in Europe. I do not think I have been unfair—I always try to be fair over these matters—but that has been the policy—a policy ignoring those stronger links in the chain which are moving more to the Right-wing parties every day in that part of Europe where they are allowed to do so—which I maintain has led us into difficulties far greater than we need have had in these days.

In regard to the issues which we have to face over Russia, in Berlin and elsewhere, Berlin is only a symptom of this struggle for the soul of Europe which is being fought out at present in the debating councils of the world. One thing is certain, that any appeasement in Berlin, any retreat by the democracies at this time, would spell the doom of Western Europe and would mean that Western Germany, and maybe all Europe, would collapse under this ever-growing threat. And it is a threat. I think sometimes that perhaps hon. Members have been inclined to argue as to whether the Russians are bluffing or not. If one is wise, one's policy should be built on the assumption that those who are opposing one on any particular issue are not bluffing. If it is based on that, one knows where one stands.

At the present time we are told that a lot of hard bargaining is going on. That has been what the Press has said. It is not hard bargaining. Hard bargaining implies that two people are arguing over certain matters on which they disagree, and trying to come to a settlement with mutual concessions. I am not blaming the Government entirely for our difficulties; we have to work in co-operation with the United States, France and other countries. Our difficulty lies in the fact that we are on the defensive. If, for instance, in Berlin the Russians contrived to create a situation in which they raised the blockade and, in return, got their full currency requirements without any safeguards, they would win all along the line and, of course, the blockade could be imposed again in a week or two.

My point is this—that even if we hold our own in Berlin, we simply go back to the status quo. Any concession that is made can only be made by us, and I suggest it is time that the democracies began to consider the necessity of striving for some diplomatic initiative as against Russia outside, to go on to an offensive policy of diplomacy in order to make certain of weapons to use when we have to bargain. It becomes a bargain if we have our own weapons too, but if it is simply a question of whether we stay as we are or give way a little, the other side giving nothing away, it is not hard bargaining.

These are my last words. I believe broadly in the conception of Western Union. It is true that Western Union can be expressed in many ways. We have to combine and maintain both the British Empire and our commitments in Europe. Those who speak from the standpoint of the "Daily Express," and certain of those who speak for it, and assume that in connection with Europe any real alliance in Europe is unnecessary, that the British Empire can stand by itself, are living in a past world. We need the Empire, but the Empire and this country need a secure Europe, and that Europe can be obtained only if the democracies are prepared to work for freedom within Europe. I shall welcome the time, which will come, when full-scale co-operation between the British Empire, the United States and the Western Powers of Europe is going to check the flow of Communism and sweep it back whence it came, to re-light the lamps of Europe

and bring back to the world that peace and stability which, without courage and determination, we can never maintain for ourselves or for mankind.

7.0 p.m.

*Mr. Awbery (Bristol, Central).* I have listened with interest to the references in the Debate to Malaya, and particularly to those made by the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher). I understand that some of the Communists of Malaya came to this country to interview the hon. Member and get advice. Why they came to the hon. Member for West Fife I do not know. I do know that in Malaya there is a magazine published by the Communists which has two sickles and two hammers, while in this country they use only one.

The hon. Member mentioned the interests which we have in Malaya, and I want to confine my remarks this evening to this colony of ours. It is clear that the tragic position of Malaya has been exploited by many people for political purposes. They are using the tragic position created by their friends to attack this Government, which they almost invariably support in the Lobbies of this House. They have told us that there are trade unionists in prison in Malaya, and that statement is correct, though the inference behind it is not. There are trade unionists in prison in this country, but not because they are trade unionists. They are in prison because they have broken the law, and, if there are trade unionists in prison in Malaya, they are in prison not because they are trade unionists but because they have broken the law. There is no colony where the trade unionists or workers have been more encouraged to form trade unions since 1945 than in Malaya. The time has now come when this Government must not only defend its position as a democratic government, but when it must vigorously attack those forces, wherever they may be, which desire to destroy democratic principles. I believe that this Government intends to defend democracy in the colony of Malaya, and we know that at the present time a large number of our men are in that country.

Some time ago I was in Malaya, and I met some of these men. I recently received a letter from friends in Malaya who told me that the men we met on some committees when we were discussing the problem of the trade union movement out there are now fighting against us in the jungle of Malaya. It is far easier to go into the jungle in that spectacular way than it is to remain in the towns and to help to form a democratic organisation. It is easy to become a bandit. But the Malayan people do not want bandits. Neither do they want martyrs. What they want are sincere and honest men who will work, strive, live and continue incessantly to establish democratic principles and raise the standard of life of the people higher than it is at present. Malaya and the world are passing through a stormy period which calls for the best which is in us all and which demands the highest, noblest and the greatest unselfish service which we can give to our nation, to our colonies and to the world.

I want to say a word regarding our colonial position generally. During the past decade, there has been a great awakening in the colonies. Whatever we desire, we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that there has been a mighty change in the minds of the men and women in our colonies. They are now demanding something better and higher than they have ever had in the past. They are no longer satisfied to be treated as they were in 1848, or even as they were treated in 1938. The old ideas are now behind us, and they are looking forward with confidence to a new social order which they hope to set up, with or without our co-operation.

The question then arises whether we are prepared to help and to give guidance to the inevitable changes which are taking place in our colonies and Empire. If we say honestly "Yes, we are prepared to give that advice and guidance," then our colonies will remain within the Empire, and they will still feel that they are members of one big family, sharing our joys and sorrows, our prosperity and our adversity. If we say "No, we are not prepared to give this advice and guidance by word and action," then I fear that a number of our colonies will drop out of the Commonwealth one by one. The feeling of exploitation still existing in them must be removed, and we must establish a spirit of co-operation and goodwill. We have not only interests in the colonies; we have responsibilities and obligations to these people which we as a nation cannot pass to another. Our strongest tie with them is the family tie, that of a common

weal and common good. The power to inflict injury or withhold good will not maintain the necessary co-operation between the colonies and ourselves. It is clear that they have given up the old, and we have to give directions to the new.

I want to congratulate the Government on their attitude to the colonies in general and to Malaya in particular. I recently visited Malaya, and, because of that, there has been stimulated in me an interest in this rich and beautiful country. It gave me an opportunity of making some personal contacts which otherwise I would not have had. I met the High Commissioner, Sir Edward Gent, whose tragic death all of us in this House deeply deplore. I regarded him as a man of integrity, high moral standing and with more than ordinary endowments. He had the welfare of Malaya and the Malayan people at heart, and he thought not only of their business interests—and he did that in regard to tin and rubber—but also about the conditions of the plantation workers.

The policy which he carried out on behalf of the Government has been criticised in this House and in another place. He was criticised because he did not take a firm hand, or use the big stick. He was blamed for not bringing in the military and police earlier. I am convinced from my observations there that if he had done so the position would have been much worse than it is now, and we would have had far more serious trouble 12 or 18 months ago than we are experiencing. I am convinced that the High Commissioner moved neither too fast nor too slow. He understood the psychology of the Malays, Chinese and Indians, and acted accordingly. We can only understand the policy of the High Commissioner and that of the Government if we understand the position as it obtained in Malaya at that time. We must remember that Malaya was occupied for several years. Its industries, its tin and rubber plantations had been destroyed. There was a feeling of frustration in the minds of the people, who had thought that their position under our flag was impregnable.

Mr. W. Fletcher The hon. Member has stated that the tin and rubber were destroyed, but that is entirely untrue. No tin was destroyed and very little of the rubber plantations was destroyed. That is proved by the fact that within three months rubber was restored.

Mr. Awbery During the whole period of the occupation the plantations were neglected and because of that neglect they could not produce the rubber and there was a feeling of frustration in the minds of the people. I am trying to convey the psychological effect on the people rather than the effect on the industries. There have been three years of anti-British propaganda dinned into the minds of the people. Ninety per cent. of the natives were illiterate and could not read nor write, labour conditions were bad, hours of labour long and wages low. The resisters had been encouraged to create chaos and confusion wherever they went. Illegal acts had been condoned, encouraged and even praised by the authorities. The Japanese left quickly and left a trail of economic and political troubles behind them, and the position in 1945, 1946 and 1947 was explosive and full of danger. Precipitate action or a tactless move or indiscretion by anyone in power would have meant greater trouble than we are now experiencing.

Therefore, I have to congratulate the Government, who acted through Sir Edward Gent, on the action which was taken. The skilful handling of the position and the moral courage which was shown saved the position at the time. Instead of using the big stick method, advice and guidance were given to employers and workers about problems in their industries. Sir Edward found two forces at work. One wanted to go back to the old conditions which prevailed before the war, and there are still some employers who want to go back to those old slave conditions—

Mr. Gammans Slave?

Mr. Awbery Almost slave conditions.

Colonel Gomme-Duncan (Perth and Kinross, Perth) Perfect nonsense.

Mr. Gammans Is the hon. Member aware that before the war the International Labour Office said that Malaya had the best conditions of labour of any country in Asia, and compared favourably with many countries in Europe?

Mr. Awbery I was comparing the conditions which prevailed before the war with those of today.

Mr. Gammans But the hon. Member said "slave conditions."

Mr. W. Fletcher Is the hon. Member aware that 60 per cent. of the rubber and tin is produced by native owners? Are they slaves to themselves?

Mr. Awbery The wages of the native planters were 1s. 2d. a day before the war and workers on the plantations are now receiving 3s. 6d.—a Malayan dollar and a half. I am comparing rates of wages.

Mr. Gammans What is the price of rice?

Mr. Awbery The price of rice is 30 cents a catty, which is about 7½d. for a pound and a third. In fairness to the planters, I must say that very few of them want to go back to the old conditions. They recognise that changes are taking place and I give credit to 95 per cent. of the planters for adopting that attitude. The Governor found there were people who wanted to go forward and decided that his policy should be not to go backward with a lot, but forward with a few. There is no doubt that he did not nurse the delusion that we could impose power and privilege over the natives for longer than we have. He endeavoured to maintain a balance between employers and workers, and advised them and gave directions. The result is that there have been comparatively few strikes in Malaya since the war ended. I am taking the opportunity of expressing my appreciation, not only of the Government, but of the work of Sir Edward Gent during the whole time he was in control.

I wish to confirm the statement made by the hon. Member for Bury (Mr. W. Fletcher) that Malaya is rehabilitating itself very quickly, especially when we have regard to some of the experiences through which the people went and to the fact that they were devastated for many years by an occupying enemy. Anti-British feeling in Malaya is comparatively small. I found no anti-British feeling among all the people I met, except for a few Communists who exploited the position and who said, "We have driven out the Japanese, let us drive out the British." Among the ordinary workers in Malaya I found very little anti-British feeling. The trade unionists of Malaya do not want to build up a Communist organisation. They do not want dictators, but wish to build up a healthy, democratic organisation. They want freedom for political action, such as we have. I hope the time is not far distant when they will be able to use the democratic machine as we are using it, and I am sure they will achieve their objective in due course.

We can help the Malays, not by pretending that there are no difficulties, nor by imagining that the legitimate complaints are all caused by rebels or bandits—that would be unfair—but by dealing fairly and squarely with all those who believe in and are trying to establish a democratic form of government and democratic institutions in Malaya. Malayan trade unionists have very great faith in the Government of this country. I met them and discussed problems with them, and because they expressed that faith I feel that we as a Government in this country must see that that faith is not betrayed. We must help them. The Government have helped. They have sent out trade union advisers who are doing excellent work in Malaya. I understand that several have gone quite recently to give advice to these people who, from a trade union point of view, are in the position in which we were 50 or 60 years ago, and who require guidance. If we do not guide them in the democratic path others will guide them in another way, and the trouble in the future will be far greater than it is at the present time.

The Malays have made some political progress. It has not been spectacular, but much criticism has come from people who are ill-informed or misinformed about the position in Malaya. From the political point of view, I should say that the Malayan people are where we were in 1850 in this country.

Mr. Pickthorn Then make a speech instead of reading it.

Mr. Awbery I am not reading it. I have notes, as has the hon. Gentleman when he speaks, and if he used more notes his speeches would be more worthy of hearing.

The progress to political maturity in Malaya will be much faster than it has been with us because they have our experience behind them to guide them in their work, but the Malays are passing through a difficult period. I was convinced, when I saw the lads going to the schools at Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, that those young men will guide the democratic destinies of Malaya in the near future.

I want to congratulate the Government on what they have done. I am confident that our present Secretary of State for the Colonies will do the right thing by Malaya, as he has done by the other colonies. I want to congratulate him. To me the human problems of the colonies are greater than the monetary and financial ones and must be handled with as great a care and with great understanding; otherwise we may lose Malaya and some of the other colonies, as we have lost some in the past.

7.22 p.m.

Mr. Gammans (Hornsey) I must congratulate the hon. Member for Central Bristol (Mr. Awbery) on his visit to Malaya. I sincerely hope he may pay another one. If he does he may have an opportunity to correct some of the misunderstandings which now certainly exist in his mind. He may learn, for example, that Malaya is not a Colony, as he referred to it in his speech on several occasions. Singapore is a Colony, so is Penang, but most of the country is a Protectorate and not a Colony, and does not like being called a Colony. He may also learn that 90 per cent. of the people are not illiterate. He may, in fact, be able to discover for himself that the Malay peasant, in fact the people of all races in Malaya, would very strongly resent being called slaves, as he referred to them.

Mr. Awbery I did not say they were slaves, I said that conditions were slave conditions. So far as the educational side is concerned, I visited schools and I know how far illiteracy extended.

Mr. Gammans The hon. Member might learn that they would resent very strongly being described as having lived under slave conditions. The hon. Member would also realise that the history of Malaya did not start when the present Secretary of State for the Colonies assumed his high office.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher) is not here. I would have liked an opportunity to congratulate him on the high honour conferred on him by Stalin on his recent visit to Czechoslovakia. I trust that before long we shall have the pleasure of seeing that decoration around his neck. I gather that the hon. Member does not think much of Marshall Aid. I often wonder why those hon. Gentlemen in this House and the people in the country who do not think much of Marshall Aid do not practise a little more what they preach. After all, one out of every four meals which we eat today we are getting from the bounty of America. Why do not those people who do not like Marshall Aid do without one out of every four meals, why do they not go to the food office tomorrow morning and hand back a quarter of their coupons? They have said that Marshall Aid is a bad thing; that is the way to prove it.

I wish to say a few words about the speech of the Foreign Secretary. I think I have heard every speech he has made in this Parliament. I thought that the speech he made today was the most disappointing one to which I have listened. He seemed to me to have almost lost faith in himself and that he was apologising for his failures rather than giving much hope for the future. If I may use a cricketing metaphor, I think he has perhaps been a good stonewaller but it is about time he made a few runs.

It ought to be perfectly obvious to everyone in this country today that we are faced with as big a menace as faced us with regard to Hitler, that the Communist danger is as great as was the danger of pre-war Germany. But we have at

least been warned and we should be grateful for three things. The first is that Russia has made her intentions perfectly clear to the world. We ought to be under no illusions about what Russia is after—world domination. Secondly, we ought to be grateful that the headquarters of the United Nations are in New York and not anywhere in Europe because the Americans had an exaggerated idea of what that organisation would do. Now that it has proved so disappointing they have realised that its failure is not due to the malign influence of Europe, as they would otherwise have thought, but is due to Russia deliberately trying to wreck it. The third thing for which we should be grateful is that the United States did not go isolationist after the second World War. That fact may well prove to be the greatest outstanding factor in world politics of the 20th century.

I do not want to say much about affairs in Europe. I wish chiefly to speak about Asia, but it so happened I was in Berlin less than a week ago. I would like to pay a tribute to the wonderful work being done by the British and American air forces in carrying food, coal and raw materials to the German people. It is true to say that so far as Berlin is concerned the Russians have suffered a tactical defeat. It is only a tactical defeat, but they banked on two things, first, that we could not supply Berlin, and we can; I am assured that we can go on doing so all the winter. The other thing upon which they banked, is that the Germans would be intimidated. Neither of those two things has happened. But do not let us delude ourselves. If we have won a temporary tactical victory in Berlin, the overall world position is as bad, somber and dangerous as it ever was before.

I will express my views frankly. I do not think this state of affairs can go on. We can perhaps come to some temporary accommodation over Berlin, but I do not think that the world can go on living in this uneasy armistice from which ultimately it must tumble into war. There has to be a showdown sooner or later, a showdown that involves the risk of war. I do not say that that will mean war; in so far as we are strong, resolute and united there will not be a war. But unless we are to tumble into war or be driven into war at a moment which suits Russia I am convinced that sooner or later a showdown must come.

I wish to say a few words about Asia. I hope that some time during this Debate we shall hear a little more from some Member of the Government than we heard from the Foreign Secretary about events in the Far East. Is our horizon today so limited that we cannot look away to Asia? Do we not realise to what extent, to put it no higher, the standard of living of the ordinary man or woman in this country depends upon our trade with Asia? One thing is quite certain. In so far as Russia is checked in her aggression in Europe, she will turn her attention to Asia; in fact, that has started already.

I intend to ask one or two questions. First of all, about China. We hardly ever have a reference to China in this House. Has the Government any policy towards China, or is China just to drift into Communism and chaos? Let us be under no misunderstanding. If China were to go Communist in the full sense of the word, whatever reverses Russia might suffer here in Europe, in the overall world position she would be immeasurably stronger than she has ever been before. As the House is aware, China has suffered in the past few years from inflation, until we reached the stage when I think four million Chinese dollars went to the pound. Now China has a new currency and I want to ask this question: Is His Majesty's Government doing anything, or proposing to do anything, in co-operation with the United States, to give any sort of international backing to that currency? Has the United States been approached? Has China asked us?

Turning to trade treaties: the United States has a trade treaty with China; why have not we? Is there any reason why we should not negotiate a trade treaty? There are one or two points of difference between ourselves and China. Have we had any satisfaction whatever for the outrages on British property at the Shameen Canton? A vast amount of our property was destroyed; have we had any compensation? Have we come to any satisfactory arrangement with China over the payment of compensation to the members of Shanghai Municipality who have served China and have served this country so well, and whose service came to an end when we handed back Shanghai to China?

I hear disturbing stories about our position in Japan. It is perfectly true that we acquiesced in the idea that Japan should be predominantly an American responsibility, but is there any reason why we should not have a fair share of the trade of Japan? We have abdicated in the Far East, even as we have abdicated in the Middle East. Even our small, token army of occupation in Japan has been withdrawn and it is quite understandable that both the Japanese and the Americans should think we no longer have any interest in that part of the world.

One word about Burma, which was referred to this afternoon by the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden). I hope we are to hear something about Burma better than that said this afternoon by the Foreign Secretary. Does the Prime Minister still boast, as he did during the Burma Debate, that we have given Burma her freedom? Who has turned out to be right over Burma—we, on this side of the House, who warned the Government that it was fatal to hand over self-government to the Burmese until the country had been pacified, who warned the Government that the Pang-long Agreement between the Burmese and non-Burmese races was largely bogus and that the idea of scuttling out of the country while it was still devastated by war was bound to lead to disaster? Were we right, or were the right hon. Gentlemen opposite and their followers who, in a moment of abandon, gave up our responsibilities in that country? All we can say is that we on this side have been wrong in only one respect: all we predicted has happened more quickly than we thought it would. Only in this morning's paper I read that: "Burma today presents a paradox of a good rice harvest with millions of hungry people. The whole system of government in Burma has broken down." We shall be very lucky if we do not see civil war from one end of the country to the other, as we may if Russia decides it is to her advantage to have a puppet State on the Indian Ocean. If that happens, what we shall have done is not to give the Burmese people their liberty; all we shall have done is to hand over the Burmese to Russian tyranny. We have seen half Eastern Europe follow the same course.

Before I leave Burma I want to ask what is happening to British interests there? A large amount of British capital is invested in Burma and I saw in yesterday morning's paper that the Burmese Government have repudiated all liability for damage that was done to property during the scorched earth policy in the Japanese invasion. Incidentally, I never thought anything else would happen, but are those companies just to lose their money? When we debated the position in the Committee stage in this House we asked that question of the Government and we were assured that all would be quite all right; the Burmese Government would accept liability. What about the industries which have been expropriated since we handed over power—the Irrawaddy flotilla, the teak companies and so on? Are the Government satisfied that they will get the necessary compensation? Are they satisfied that, even if the Burmese have the will to pay compensation, they have the foreign currency with which to pay it? I believe before long we shall see Burma as a ghastly tragedy and that we in this Parliament who passed that Bill will live to regret it just as much as many of the people of Burma have very largely regretted it already.

Turning to Malaya, I really cannot accept what the Foreign Secretary said this afternoon. I regard what he said as a complete travesty of history and a complete travesty of the facts of the present situation. He talks about what happened there as being a Communist menace. Of course, it was a Communist menace, but what I would say without the slightest hesitation is that the Government were very largely responsible for creating the conditions under which that menace flourished. The hon. Member for Central Bristol defended the administration in Malaya by saying that he agreed that police action should not have been taken before it was taken. I should like him to make that speech in front of a lot of planters who have been shot at day and night as they work on their estates. Whatever the hon. Member for Central Bristol may say—

*Mr. Awbery* I am not justifying the banditry which is going on at the present time or underestimating the task of the people on the plantations. I know the position they are in; it is a very difficult position and I am not trying to justify it. I must have expressed myself very badly if that is the misunderstanding which the hon. Member has of my speech.

Mr. Gammans I do not wish to misunderstand or misrepresent the hon. Member, but it is my clear recollection that he said he was perfectly satisfied that the Government should not have taken strong police action before they did so. In other words, he said he was perfectly happy with the administration of Malaya. That is a point on which I entirely disagree with the Foreign Secretary and the whole thesis of what I am trying to say to the Government is that they asked for it, and that what has happened is a deliberate result of weakness and bad government.

What the Government do not seem to realise—and I am sorry that the Colonial Secretary is not here—is that they are universally condemned in Malaya by Europeans and Asiatics alike for their policy and that people are wondering how it is that 5,000 indifferently armed terrorists can defy the whole might of the British Empire. I could tell the Foreign Secretary, if he were here that the people of Malaya are sick to death of all his platitudes. Hardly a day passes without some European or Chinese being butchered in cold blood. A couple of weeks ago Dr. Ong, one of the Chinese Members of the Legislative Council, was shot in his own house in Penang. If the Government think that the sort of speech we had this afternoon is going to satisfy the people out there, the sooner they get out of that frame of mind the better.

I want to give the Government a very solemn warning, that unless they can restore law and order pretty quickly we shall see a breakdown of the production of tin and rubber throughout the whole country. We cannot expect people to go on day and night living under this terrorism. I think that we ought to pay tribute to those gallant men and women, both European and Asiatic, who are living under a constant menace of death. Do not let the Government be deceived over the statistics with regard to the production of rubber. I was informed only last night that either this month, or certainly next, we can expect a reduction of 10,000 tons a month in the production of rubber. Ten thousand tons a month earns us 4½ million American dollars. I hope that hon. Members opposite realise that the sales of tin and rubber last year from Malaya earned us more American dollars than all the whisky, motor cars, textiles and other exports of the United Kingdom put together.

There are two charges against the Government, neither of which any responsible Minister tried to answer when we had a Colonial Debate in July. The first is that they had adequate warning of the Communist menace. The second charge which they have to answer is that they faced the situation, when at last they saw it, with flabbiness, indifference, and even with foolishness. For the past year or more, every letter which I have had from Malaya has contained warnings of the Communist danger. Every speech of every responsible person in the country has warned the Government. Day after day and week after week, every responsible newspaper has said the same thing. What did the Government do? First of all, they did two things which were so unbelievably foolish that it is difficult to imagine anyone with experience of the country giving support to them. What they did was first to relax the regulations for the proper supervision of secret societies, and secondly, to abandon the power of banishment of people from abroad who had abused the hospitality of the country. Both of those two provisions have now been brought back, but who was responsible for doing away with them? Was it the administration on the spot or was it Downing Street?

When we had the Colonial Debate, I asked the Secretary of State two questions, and he did not answer either of them. I ask him again: Did the Government have warning from the police and military intelligence of this menace? Either they did not have the warning, in which case there is something wrong with our intelligence, or, if they had the warning, they ignored it. My information is that they had the warning, and I should be glad if the Colonial Secretary would tell us whether he would dare to publish the reports which they had from the Director of Security Services in Malaya' for the past two years.

The second thing that I asked then and which I ask again tonight is: Why was it that even after more than two months of open warfare the country was still short of arms? Surely we want stocks of arms in this country and throughout the Empire after a great war of this sort. Why is it that we had to send radio equipment out by air? I read in a Malayan newspaper a month ago this tragic paragraph: "The police at Gua Musang were reported to have fought for 90 minutes



until their ammunition was spent and then surrendered.” And that “Within 30 miles of Kuala Lumpur the police had to withdraw twice to conserve ammunition.” A third incident was that a police officer reported that he was handicapped by having no hand grenades or Bren guns. How in the face of these statements can the Foreign Secretary expect to reassure the people of Malaya or the people of this country? The truth is that the Government were caught napping over the whole business, and when they did at last realise how serious it was, they treated it in a way which I can only describe as flatulent flabbiness.

The other day I saw that the Secretary of State for War, in a farewell speech to the Brigade of Guards, with a belligerence with which I had not hitherto associated him, exhorted the Guards, rather unnecessarily I thought, "Not to let the old Flag down," and he hoped that they would soon be back home. I hope so, too. Something is drastically wrong with the whole show unless they are back soon. Unless we can put down 5,000 terrorists within a short time, the Government had better come to this House and confess the ineptitude of their administration.

There are many other things in the Far East which I think that this House ought to consider, but somehow or other we do not seem to have the time to discuss them. As, for example, the situation in Korea, the growth of Communism in Siam, and the size of the Russian Embassy in Bangkok. We ought to realise more what is happening in the Dutch East Indies where the Nationalist movement is now hardly distinguishable from Communism, and where the problems which the Dutch have to face are becoming more and more similar to the ones which we have to face in Malaya. I have not the time to deal with those matters tonight.

Let me say in conclusion that this is a paltry Session of Parliament in all conscience—a Socialist fiddling in a burning world—but I hope that it may be redeemed before this Session is over by an attempt to lift our eyes beyond the sordid reason that brought us here together to the larger and wider horizon of Asia and all that Asia means to the people of this country, and to the world.

7.46 p.m.

Mr. Walter Fletcher (Bury) I would like to devote what I have to say to a great extent to the question of Malaya. I had a great deal of sympathy with the Foreign Secretary who was obviously batting on an unfamiliar wicket and who had been provided with a very wickedly inaccurate brief. In the latter stages of his speech, he issued a word of warning against the danger of over-simplification. Over-simplification, in his brief on Malaya, had reached a point where it was a complete caricature. The facts were wrong and the conclusions were wrong.

It is the custom in 'this House to declare any interest which one may have in the matter under discussion, and I declare the interest which I have as a member of a firm which has been responsible since the end of the war for shipping 250,000 tons of rubber from Malaya to America and thereby netting 100 million dollars. I am sorry that the Leader of the House is not here. On his shoulders rests a great deal of responsibility and on those, too, of the Colonial Secretary for the present situation. Throughout the whole of last year, time and time again, I and others requested a debate on Malaya, because at the beginning of the year the Colonial Secretary had asked us not to debate the question until the new constitution had got under way, so as to give it a chance. We naturally acceded to that request.

For nearly a year there has been constant refusal on the most flimsy pretexts to have a debate on Malaya, and those of us who wished to put forward warnings which they were receiving from every condition and class of person locally, never had an opportunity to do so. The responsibility lies firmly and squarely on the shoulder of the Government—the Lord President from a technical point of view, and the Colonial Secretary who has shown far too little interest in Malaya. Throughout the year, he has been occupied largely with Palestine, the West Indies and other matters, but he has never shown a real knowledge of what is going on in Malaya and the real dangers there.

I agree with the analysis which the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) gave, that what we are faced with there in the last phase is an insurrection and not merely a sporadic outbreak of lawlessness and banditry. I will come later to the technical importance of the difference between insurrection and sporadic outbreaks of lawlessness. Before that last phase it was obvious to everyone out there and frequent warnings were given—I gave warning myself in January of last year when I was there—that there were great dangers in the country, and that a quantity of arms had been put there by force 136 and others creating anti-Japanese resistance during the war. That store of arms has not been greatly increased since 1945. No action was taken at the time to round up those arms, or those who might have them. No warning of any sort was accepted; nothing but a rather skeptical outlook and the idea that one was trying to create trouble. Meanwhile, what was happening? It was becoming perfectly clear that lawlessness and banditry was a good paying proposition; that as a profession—without a trade union at that stage—it was a much more attractive life than the peaceful and natural avocations of being a rubber tapper or a tin worker.

With the gradual realisation that law and order were not going to be preserved by firm government, that the police were not receiving enough physical arms, let alone moral arms which comes from the confidence that the Government is backing one up—which they never did have—it became quite clear that banditry would become a paying profession, so that the young man saw that instead of having to work by the sweat of his brow, perhaps on his own plantation—for 60 per cent. of the rubber is obtained from Asiatic small owners, which I would assure the hon. Member for Central Bristol (Mr. Awbery) is a fact—a rather onerous and arduous way of earning one's living, it was much better to join a guerilla band and shoot up a few people every fortnight, and live in somebody else's house on pretty well the fat of the land. It was that continued success of banditry which gave the opportunity to the Communists, who watch for trouble and chaos throughout the world, to seize the weapon which His Majesty's Government so carefully forged for them. After the long period of unorganized banditry, we are then faced with a real insurrection.

The value of Malaya to the British Empire cannot be over-emphasised. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must be keeping an eye on this. We have heard the figures several times during this Debate. The rubber shipments from Malaya alone total more than the direct exports from this country to America, and the Chancellor must be feeling pretty anxious about it at the present time, because—the reason is slightly technical, but I must put it before the House because it is a major question in regard to Malaya at the present moment—the flow of rubber and tin from Malaya depends on the goods being insured against all risks from the time, in the case of rubber, it is tapped in the tree, to the time it is put on the ship. The insurance companies have issued a warning to everybody—and it affects the smallholder and the small trader as much as the big man—that because of the "state of insurrection" which exists today they are not covered, because the policies do not cover that contingency.

As good a definition as any of "insurrection" is: a concerted effort by people in a country to seize the government and power of that country at a given moment. If the policy does not cover that, how can the flow of goods continue? It cannot continue. The total risk may not be a very great one, but it is far too great for those concerned in tin mining, rubber production, oilseeds, or whatever it is to carry that risk themselves. Consequently, everybody is scrambling to get out of that risk, which they cannot take because they cannot face it financially. It is not from any bad motive. The whole of Malayan economy is probably uninsured today. This was put up to His Majesty's Government quite recently by all the associations concerned. It all occurred after Mr. Malcolm MacDonald had used the word "insurrection" in a speech out there in the first week in August. What has been the result? There has been an almost inconceivable misunderstanding of the situation, and misleading of home authority by the Government of Malaya. I and others put this matter before some of His Majesty's Ministers, and this is the sort of reply given: "But the flow of rubber is splendid. The shipments this last month are bigger than they ever have been. What are you talking about? It is all nonsense." That is a complete misunderstanding. The real truth is that the pipeline was being emptied as fast as possible; everybody was transferring everything they could, even if unsold, so that it could be covered by a marine policy. Let me give a word of warning, which has been given before, but nobody has listened: If the flow of rubber

and tin from Malaya ceases, then the whole economic structure, the gathering of dollars, and the question of narrowing the export gap will be thrown into utter confusion. The contribution it makes is enormous. But this is the result of the policy of His Majesty's Government in refusing to listen to the advice they have been given by everybody concerned, native associations as well as others.

There is a way out of it. The Government must underwrite it: they would be underwriting in sterling the continuation of the dollar flow; but that will not cure it altogether. The evil has been done; because of the past history of Government war insurance in Malaya, where claims have not yet been paid, and where every sort of legal hair-splitting is indulged in where evidence could of necessity not be produced, that would not give a real reassurance which is so necessary if this flow is to continue. There must be credit and belief in the good faith of Government, in their ability to carry out the essential economic functions of keeping a country going. Those are difficult things to build up. They were built up in Malaya by private enterprise over many decades before the war; there was no question of exploitation, and it is complete nonsense to say there was. His Majesty's Government have congratulated private enterprise on the efforts it has made to get the flow of trade going after the war, but that cannot continue unless there is immediate action to see that the shock which has been given to the whole economic machine in Malaya is alleviated as far as possible by the Government underwriting those risks. If they do not, if there is the usual dillydallying between Departments, and the usual discussions whether the Colonial Office has to ask the Treasury or whether the Treasury is waiting to hear from somewhere else, the pipeline will be emptied and the flow of goods will be stopped.

It is not only a question of money. America is greatly concerned if she does not receive the tin and rubber for which she willingly pays. At a moment when rearmament is starting it is absolutely vital that this flow should continue. The muddle has been made by His Majesty's Government, and has led to this situation, with an inability to govern properly, and it is now up to them immediately, and with instant action, to try to put their error right.

In the original phase after the war, what happened? The Secretary of State for the Colonies, exuding good will and Fabian rectitude, in equal proportions I should say, devoted his attention and that of the Colonial Office generally to building on to the Malayan ship of State a vast superstructure, a new constitution, with new forms of voting and education—trade union education; I am not saying a word against them in the right place and at the right time, but the Government were not looking at the hull and engines of the ship, which were badly in need of repair. Do hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite really believe for one moment that what concerns the village woman in Malaya is how she is going to vote at the next election for her representative in the Constituent Assembly at Kuala Lumpur or Singapore? She is concerned with whether she can go down to the river with her water pot in the evening and fill it up without fear of a bandit. The first task of His Majesty's Government in that country is to drop this admirable superstructure, which they may be able to build later on, and to see that the ordinary vocation of the man in the street—be he Chinese, Malayan, Indian or European, lorry driver or rubber tapper—can be carried on without fear of being attacked by bandits. Govern or go.

Look at the record as regards the police out there. I have—possibly as a result of speeches in this House on many occasions—received many letters from out there; heartrending letters. A young police officer says: "We had to break off the engagement because we had only one machine gun and three belts of ammunition, and no hand grenades, when we could have rounded up at least 300 bandits." That was in Selanger. Has there been a shortage of machine guns, ammunition and hand grenades? What has happened to the stocks left over from the war? What about His Majesty's Government's responsibility in forgetting those simple things? What about the matter of the police? There is a big rumour in Malaya that has appeared in the newspapers that when the Palestine Police were offered to Malaya they were turned down as being unnecessary. Is that true or not? If it is true, it is one of the most shameful things I have ever heard. It shows a complacency and a lack of realisation of how to tackle this problem.

We are now sending troops. Do not let that deceive anybody. I was one of those in the Far East during the war, and had some knowledge in training troops for jungle warfare and underground work. It takes at least six months, probably a year, to train anybody for that type of warfare in Malaya. It makes my heart bleed to think of sending out there troops who have not been trained, and to think of them being used as mature troops, which the Government may well undertake in order to cover up some of the defects I have been trying to point out. That is a very grave responsibility. It does not save their face or solve the problem if they have sent out immature white troops.

What they should have done is to reinforce the police by native recruitment, give them arms and give them moral support which every police officer should have, knowing that if he takes preventive action which may result in deaths when he sees people assembling he has full support right from the top. That has not yet been given. There is still cringing and shrinking back, and if it continues this "quit Asia" movement will gain momentum. In certain countries there are enough examples for those who believe that lawlessness and banditry may pay. It has occurred in Malaya due to the laxity of the Government and their refusal to listen to those who thought that prevention would have been very much better than cure.

We heard from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, reading his brief on Malaya, a statement about the food position. It was a thoroughly complacent one. For nearly two years I and other Members have been pressing the Government on this matter of rice supplies. The Minister of Food, with that slightly oleaginous smile of his, told us that over 1¼ million tons of rice had been allocated to Malaya, but of that contract 700,000 tons have never been delivered. If that is the cure to the ills of Malaya, having a four-ounce rice ration, then I think the cure is almost worse than the disease. There is a terrific responsibility on the Government, and the complacent attitude of the Foreign Secretary today about Malaya can only be expelled if the chief culprit, the Colonial Secretary, will come forward and admit quite freely the errors of the past, the lack of courage and willingness to grasp this nettle, and will not only send troops but see that the police are given every sort of backing and help.

What about the arming of plantations? I have an instance of a plantation group which put in for arms and it took five weeks before they could get an answer while the matter was being bandied about between three Ministers. There was no sense of urgency, and it was not until there was the threat of some publicity that an answer was given. This case can be multiplied over and over again, not only with the big plantation groups but with the Asiatic producers of tin and rubber who are asking their associations for support. Then we hear the Foreign Secretary giving a sort of impression that the Government have really handled the whole thing extremely well, a sort of mutual admiration society. How can one have great confidence that the Government can continue to handle Empire and Colonial matters in the future?

Look at the delays in meeting the justified claims of those who suffered damage in the last war who have gone ahead in spite of this handicap, and brought Malaya back to being the greatest dollar arsenal of the Empire. Their claims have not been settled, and it is only now that methods of settlement are being put forward. The Government think that they are being generous in offering £35 million for a country which is gathering in the biggest crop of dollars. The hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher), probably by mistake, emitted a certain amount of truth on the dollar earnings of Malaya. There is a considerable economic danger at the present time. We have seen instances of members of the sterling bloc breaking away. We have seen an alteration in the rate of the £ in the case of New Zealand, to be followed probably by an alteration in the case of Australia. What will happen if through the Government's failure to tackle the Malayan problem Malaya one day comes forward and says that she will retain her dollars and go on to gold and dollar currency because she is the country that earns the dollars?

If the Government want to retain for the benefit of the whole Empire and for the vital necessity of getting food and raw materials for this country dollars produced in Malaya, they must take—a very different attitude to that which they have taken up to the present. They must see that the average inhabitant realises the great advantages in remaining within the Commonwealth. The man in the street and the woman in the village are anxious that they shall be able to

carry out their ordinary daily functions in some sort of safety, and greater power for the police and more arms, and above all an inspiring lead and not just complacency, will alone solve the problem.

I wish now to say a word on the general situation that has arisen from this Debate. The word "democracy" has probably been used more frequently during this Debate than any other. Many men and women throughout the world are asking themselves the question whether democracy is up to date and fitted for modern conditions, or whether some form of authoritarian State where decisions can be taken more quickly would not be better. The mere fact that this question is being asked in France and in other countries in Europe and the world is to those who believe in democracy—and I number myself among them—the greatest danger sign there can possibly be.

What do these people see in the three great democratic countries? In the United States, where there has been a wonderful lead given and a new impetus given to Europe through their generosity, far-sightedness and increase in political maturity, they are sliding into a period where the Presidential and local elections will take precedence over everything else. There will be a slowing up in regard to outside matters and a greater concentration on domestic issues. In France there is not only the chaos of this rotation of governments, but there is almost a breaking of the spring which makes the machine work, a lack of belief and confidence in almost anything. There is an acquiescence in things which the France that has been one of the great leaders of democracy in the world would never have accepted, which though it may not be permanent is something which causes people to ask questions that may lead them into the dangerous path of believing that authoritarianism, other than some form of Hitlerism, could achieve better results.

We have here in this country such an abuse of our democratic machine that this Session can be summoned under a complete camouflage. The position can only be rescued and is being rescued, because the Opposition are seeing to it that the impression which exists in the world is being washed out and that other things are being discussed apart from the deceitful abuses and political chicanery which are behind the calling of the present Session, as my right hon. Friend the Member for West Bristol (Mr. Stanley) very clearly pointed out.

If in the three democratic countries those people who are in doubt about the best political system see that the system is being abused and is not working well, and they see the possibility of speedy action by authoritarian States, then we shall lose exactly those people whom we wish to preserve as the background of democracy in the terrific struggle we are going to have, and it will be they who will be the fruits for the fifth column during that struggle.

I believe that one of the things we have to do for the rest of the Session, which is what we shall do on this side, is to make certain that this impression, so far as this country is concerned, no longer prevails. One of the ways, since it has been decided to call this House together, is for the Government to show in Asia, where the conditions have deteriorated so enormously, where the rosy pipe dream of the Prime Minister in regard to Burma has now completely altered, where in India we see things that would have shocked us a short time ago, and in China where there is a complete breakdown and chaos, a reversal of their policy, to be infinitely more vigorous and take immediate action to try to repair some of the egregious errors arising from their inflated pride. If they do that, they might possibly rescue the country from a disaster into which it has been led through their own failures and through no other reason.

8.12 p.m.

Colonel Gomme-Duncan (Perth and Kinross, Perth) I do not propose to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Mr. W. Fletcher) in what he said about Malaya, because it has been fairly well ventilated. A good deal more could be said in reinforcement of what has been said, but I think that for an example of pure blundering folly the Colonial Secretary we have in the present Administration takes a great deal of beating. I cannot think of one thing, since he took over his present office, of which he had not made a mess. I hope he will reply to part of this Debate tonight, because if someone else is put up it will not do. If the right hon. Gentleman is not coming back I suggest it will be a

very good opportunity for him to hand his resignation to the Prime Minister, because he is obviously not fitted for his office. Anyone with any knowledge of colonial problems realises that to the full.

However, I want to come back to Hyderabad. My right hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) made a very severe and damaging criticism of the Government about what is going on. Not one word of what he said was too strong. I think it is essential, particularly in view of what the Foreign Secretary said in his reply about Hyderabad, that the country, and the House in particular, should know a little bit more about the truth of the present situation. Truth is always good for everybody if they are out for good. The Foreign Secretary skimmed over the question of Hyderabad in a very few words and as far as I could make out—it was a little clouded, though it may have been my fault—he concentrated on the point that the Security Council were to decide on what was or what was not a State. That has nothing to do with the present situation in Hyderabad, which has been invaded by a vastly superior Power in contravention of every sworn agreement. That is the situation. While there is arguing in Paris or elsewhere as to what is a State or what is not, Hyderabad is going under from sheer force of numbers. That situation is getting worse every half hour.

I think it is essential that the country should know the basis of our relations with Hyderabad. They are summed up in these words of the Treaties of 1850–1853: “The peace union and friendship so long subsisting shall be perpetual; the friends and enemies of either shall be the friends and enemies of both.” Nothing could be clearer than that. No amount of changing and chopping of the Constitution of India can do away with the fact that that was the basis of our relationship with Hyderabad. The Commercial Treaty of 1802 said: “There shall be a free transit between the territories of the contracting parties”—that is, Great Britain and Hyderabad—“of all articles being the growth, produce or manufacture of each respectively; and, also, of all articles being the growth, produce or manufacture of any part of his Britannic Majesty's Dominions.” Nothing could be clearer than that. Under Section 7 of the India Independence Act, 1947, His Majesty's Government in their wisdom, as they thought—but in their gross folly, as I consider—divested themselves unilaterally of all forms of suzerainty without the agreement of the other parties. Hyderabad and other States were left—and this was made clear by many senior speakers from the Government Front Bench—to decide for themselves whether they should remain independent or join either of the Dominions of India or Pakistan.

As early as 8th August, 1947, the Nizam wrote to Lord Mountbatten that while he could not contemplate joining either Dominion he was willing to see Hyderabad playing its proper part in the defence of the sub-continent and external affairs undertaken in general conformity with foreign affairs of the subcontinent in friendly co-operation with both the new Dominions. Lord Mountbatten, on 12th August, in reply, recognised Hyderabad's special problem and willingness to co-operate, although he said, frankly, that he himself believed that union would be to the mutual advantage. This he confirmed in a speech to the Constituent Assembly on 15th August, 1947. On 18th September, 1947, the Nizam wrote to the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, recalling his earlier letter, and enclosing draft heads of agreement for the proposed treaty with India. He also pointed out that communal strife had been almost unknown in his State—it is important to remember this in view of what is happening now—and that accession would involve Hyderabad in bloodshed similar to that which had occurred in other parts of India where Hindu and Moslem were intermingled.

On 24th September, 1947, only six days later, India rejected the proposals of Hyderabad out of hand. They said that nothing short of accession would be acceptable to India. This, I trust the House will note, following on a very genuine and sincere attempt by the Hyderabad Government to achieve a settlement with India. Further efforts to reach agreement culminated, on 29th November, 1947, in what is known as the Standstill Agreement—an agreement which has been referred to by my right hon. Friend and others today. Does the House realise that the Nizam of Hyderabad offered to hold a plebiscite of his people on the question of accession? Does the House realise that the Nizam offered to accept arbitration on this point? I do not think it does, but that is the truth. Both these things were offered by the Nizam in his effort to do the best for his people and for the continent of India. It is clear that India never had any

intention of reaching a genuine solution, except on the exact terms that they laid down. The utterances of her leaders have proved this. I must quote one or two of the utterances of highly placed people in India. The Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, on 12th–13th November, 1937, publicly threatened Hyderabad at meetings at Rajkot and Junagadh. “The future of Kashmir”—” he said— “like that of Hyderabad, rests with the people.” What people? Certainly not the people of Hyderabad, because India had already refused to accept the plebiscite of Hyderabad's people. “Despite the attempts of Pakistan to avoid this commitment in the case of Hyderabad, and despite their attempts to avoid facing the facts of Junagadh, the will of the people will have its way. If Hyderabad does not see the writing on the wall, it will go the way of Junagadh.” I hope the House will note that Junagadh was a State which freely and willingly acceded to the Dominion of Pakistan, but was thereupon invaded by Indian troops and taken over straight away. Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of the Dominion of India, speaking in New Delhi on 2nd July, 1947, said: “When there was one strong Government in India it could not tolerate small parts of India having independent relations with foreign Powers as that might endanger the security of the country.” If those words had been put in German, we might have had a reminder of the speeches which were made not so very many years ago. In fact, it is almost word for word what our friend Hitler said.

The Standstill Agreement provided that treaties and arrangements entered into by the Crown with the State of Hyderabad should be maintained while that Standstill Agreement was still in force, and one of those which I have already quoted is the Treaty of 1802 which says: “There shall be free transit between territories of all articles ... between the State of Hyderabad and any part of His Majesty's Dominions.” Does the Government deny that that is the case, and that the Standstill Agreement made that perfectly clear? What has been the Indian reply? A deliberate and callous imposition of that most cruel of all form of compulsion—the economic and financial blockade—a total blockade in spite of what the Standstill Agreement, to which the Government of India gave their signature, said. Again that is reminiscent of Adolf Hitler.

The Indian authorities occasionally have, though often half heartedly, denied that a blockade existed. What are the facts? It is right that the country should know the facts. This blockade has not even stopped short of an embargo on medicines, drugs or chlorine, urgently needed for the purification of drinking water in the State of Hyderabad. The result has been that already in that State there has been a serious outbreak of cholera which is not yet under control. Numerous urgent representations to the Government of India failed to bring any response in the form of relief beyond the belated dispatch of a small amount of anti-cholera vaccine and just enough chlorine to suffice for about a month in the city of Hyderabad alone. That is how the Government of India look upon its solemn sworn word that there should be free transit between Hyderabad and the other dominions of His Majesty.

To show the lengths that the Government of India will go when it denies the existence of this blockade, let me quote one official announcement which comes from the Official Gazette of the Bombay Government. It is dated 3rd July, 1948. I am quoting this in connection with the statement of the Government of India that they have not imposed a blockade. This is what it said: “Whereas in the opinion of the Government of Bombay it is essential for the purposes of public safety—” mark these words— “the maintenance of public order and the tranquility of the Province of Bombay, to restrict the removal of certain commodities from the said Province or any part thereof to any place in the State of Hyderabad whether in course of transit or otherwise; now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 9 B of the Bombay Public Security Measures Act, 1947 (Born. IV of 1947), the Government of Bombay is pleased to direct that no person shall remove any commodity specified in the Schedule hereto annexed from the Province of Bombay or any part thereof to any place in the State of Hyderabad—” this is not in German but in English— “without the permission, in writing, of the Commissioner of Police, Greater Bombay, and elsewhere the District Magistrate concerned.” The articles mentioned in the Schedule are thirteen in number and cover every essential article in the well-being or running of any State. The first is foodstuffs, the second cotton and woollen textiles, including ready-made clothing of all kinds, and there are several others I need not mention. However, included in the number are petroleum and petroleum products, drugs, including medical stores, arms, ammunition and

explosives, chemicals and fertilisers of all kinds, and last but not least oils of all kinds. That is an official document issued by the Government of Bombay, which comes within the control of the Government of India. There we have a most brutal form of blockade which has been imposed and yet we are expected to believe the Government of Bombay and the Government of India when they say they have imposed no blockade. Was there ever such cynical Phariseism on the part of any Government as the use of the words "in order to preserve tranquillity in Bombay" no medical stores should go into Hyderabad? Was ever such nonsense spoken by so-called statesmen?

We have had pretty good proof already that the attitude of Pandit Nehru and his Government is entirely Nazi in its outlook. What does his Defence Minister Sardar Baldev Singh say in the course of his speech on 10th May? He says: "If we want to make India great the only way is that we should have one organisation, one leader and one slogan."—"ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer. Have we forgotten that screaming voice? What is the difference between what Sardar Baldev Singh said and what Hitler said except that one is in English and the other is in German? In Pandit Nehru and his colleagues we have the perfect replica of Hitler and his technique—what Mr. Neville Chamberlain so well described as that "sickening technique."

There was a war of nerves. Nehru on 6th June told the Prime Minister of Hyderabad that on no account could India tolerate an independent Hyderabad, adding that if it came to that he would be prepared for war. On 17th June he said: "Hyderabad, situated as it is, cannot conceivably be independent and India can never agree to it whatever happens and whatever may be the consequences." This again is in English and not in German. On 24th June at Lucknow he said that India would never coerce any State to accede to the Dominion of India. What a perfect replica of the speeches we heard in 1939. There were threats of armed force, the organised frontier incidents, the false accusations of chaos and disorder in the state of Hyderabad, which is a deliberate lie, and then the hysterical cry that he must safeguard Indian nationals. Meine geduld ist erschöpft—"My patience is exhausted." It is just the same as his master said eight or ten years ago. One by one the whole thing works into the perfect Nazi pattern. No one will deny that this man has learned his lesson very well.

Finally, "We march" and march they did. Guns, aircraft, tanks march against the tiny army of the Nizam of Hyderabad, which in spite of its size did magnificently on behalf of the King Emperor during the last war. I wonder what Mahatma Gandhi would say of his pupil Pandit Nehru if he could hear him say "We are marching, left, right, left."? Whatever Gandhi had in the way of faults he never advocated force. Here we have Nehru doing this terrible thing to this small State on his border. Since we wantonly threw over our responsibilities in India one million Moslems have died. That was in the once-peaceful India. In the State of Hyderabad, they know what to expect when the Hindu State of India takes over. That is one reason why there is nervousness on the part of the Nizam's Government.

I have to say, because it is true, that the main weight of responsibility for those million lives lies upon the shoulders of His Majesty's Government and their representative in India. Lord Mountbatten's reputation as a sailor and as Combined Operations commander is magnificent. Would that he had stayed there and remained a great man. The situation when Viceroy of India and Governor-General of India is a very different story. His strong Hindu bias, very strong, and his threats to Hyderabad in this unhappy dispute can only be described as deplorable. That Indians should unfortunately quarrel and fight among themselves is one thing, but that a man like Lord Mountbatten, with his reputation—I yield to nobody in my admiration for what he did in that sphere—and an Englishman, should take sides in a tragic dispute like that, is shameful.

May I quote from a statement made at a meeting with the Hyderabad delegation who had come to see him? In order to avoid a clash, the Hyderabad troops had been removed to a line three miles inside their own frontier. Then there was this extraordinary threat by the Governor-General of India. It is Lord Mountbatten speaking. He said that India was under great temptation to take military action. It had an army of 300,000 of which only 40,000 were in Kashmir. The



armoured division, which was of high class, was situated only three days' march away from the Hyderabad border. Mechanised and infantry brigades were also available. He went on to say that should the situation seriously deteriorate it was inevitable that India would have to take action. There was no means whatsoever of preventing the Indian Army from taking possession of Hyderabad. This, from the British Governor-General of India. He asserted that there would be terrible repercussions all over the subcontinent. The Moslems in Delhi were even now afraid of the reprisals which might be taken against them. I quote from the actual Official Record of the meeting. He went on to say that the Hyderabad delegation had always failed to reach a settlement. He considered them almost certifiable as lunatics, but they did not appear to be worried. They looked as if they had slept well and they were certainly well fed. He remarked further that they were not likely to escape blame from history for this reason. It almost passes comprehension that a man of that kind could say that kind of thing, threatening the tiny State of Hyderabad with the comparatively vast military might of the Dominion of India.

I want to know very much more from the Government. The right hon. Member for Bishop Auckland (Mr. Dalton) is to reply. I hope that he will give us a specific reply. I realise that he is neither Colonial Secretary nor Foreign Secretary, but I want to know what is going to be the Government's attitude when this matter comes up before the Security Council. This is an urgent cry from Hyderabad, but all we can get out of the Foreign Secretary is that there will be an argument among the lawyers about whether Hyderabad is a State or not. The situation is urgent, and every half-hour makes it more urgent for Hyderabad. Are the Government going to say that whatever the rights or wrongs of the legal argument we shall back up Hyderabad in her claim that "cease fire" shall be ordered and carried out, and that we shall give every form of pressure to see that that is done? Surely justice demands it.

I do not think that the Government can wish anything else. The "Faithful Ally": I wonder what His Exalted Highness the Nizam thinks about that title today when he sees what is going on apparently with the approval of the British Government? He and his people may be wrong in that belief, but that is what they think. What about his saying: "My old friend Lord Mountbatten has threatened me with 300,000 men, except 40,000 in Kashmir who are fighting there, where the terrible Pakistan people are doing exactly what the Indians are doing to Hyderabad"?

Those are things to which I want an answer, in the name of all people who believe in decency and fair play. The people of this country believe in these things. I ask sincerely that the right hon. Gentleman who is to reply will give us an absolute and categorical assurance, if not tonight then before the Debate finishes, that the Government of this country will back up Hyderabad in having "cease fire," in order that the bloody slaughter which has been forced upon them shall come to an end.

*8.36 p.m.*

Mr. Baker White (Canterbury); I wish to touch upon two matters which may appear to be unconnected. One is the situation in Malaya and the other is the condition of our own farm workers. Those subjects are really very closely connected because they are both concerned with the production of food. The aim of international Communism in Malaya, Burma and Indo-China—to the Cominform it is one campaign—is to disrupt the movement and the production of rice, in order to produce throughout the Far East the hunger and misery upon which Communism thrives.

Here in Britain there has been a sorry failure during the past few weeks on the part of His Majesty's Government to meet the needs of our own food producers. I do not think that anything like the full story of Malaya has yet been told or could be told. As a student of Communism for nearly 25 years I say that His Majesty's Government have apparently been quite blind to all the signs of a highly scientific Communist campaign developing in the Far East. His Majesty's Government were warned again and again. They had seen what had happened in Indonesia and Indo-China. In the face of the evidence one would have thought that the very first thing they would do would be to give some sort of protection to the British and Europeans living in isolated stations in Malaya, some sort of personal arms.

That was not done, and it has not been done today. I have the story of one planter. It is the story of many others. I will tell it quite briefly. This man wrote home the other day and said, "For God's sake send me some sort of personal weapon. I am 50 miles from the nearest police post. I am completely alone. I have no weapon of any sort or kind for my own protection. The police can give me nothing because they have not got it. They have given me three Malays with 303 rifles and 15 rounds of ammunition. It would be a little better if they knew how to use the rifles, but they do not." I am glad to say that through the assistance I have had from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation it has been possible, by all sorts and kinds of special arrangements, to send that man an automatic pistol from this country and 15 rounds of ammunition for his personal protection. I do not believe for one moment that he is the only white man in that condition in Malaya. Let us realise that this is part of an international Communist campaign. The Cominform has switched from certain points in Europe, where it has met with comparative failure, to the Far East and it is fighting a cold war combined with an economic war. It is doing what the Ministry for Economic Warfare and the Political Warfare Executive tried to do during the war to our enemy.

To turn to our own farms, I do not believe this country realises the farce which has been worked out in recent weeks in relation to points goods for harvest workers. The harvest workers were issued, through the farmers, with extra points as part of their rations. I think that in all something like ten million points were issued. When the Ministry issued those points they knew perfectly well that the goods did not exist to honour them, unless they expected the harvest to be got in on tinned figs and tinned grapes and expected the men to go home at night after a 12-hour day to a meal of cornflakes. The Ministry had been warned by the country grocers that before the harvest points were issued they had not even enough goods to meet the normal points, but the Minister went ahead and issued the ten million extra points. The result is that they have not been honoured.

The Minister of Food said the difficulty was that the tinned meats and tinned fish for the farm workers to take out to the fields did not exist, but there were grocers' shops in my constituency with plenty of stocks of tinned meat and tinned fish but they were not allowed to issue them to farm workers because the invoices said they were to be issued to the seasonal hop pickers only and that the regular farm workers could not have the goods. In my belief there has been a grave deception of the people whose job it is to get in the food for other people to eat next year. Whether it is Malaya or our own fields or farms, the record of this Government is, "too little and too late."

8.43 p.m.

Mr. Gerald Williams (Tonbridge) We have had a very interesting Debate on Malaya and Hyderabad, and now that my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Baker White) has switched back to home affairs, I would like to take the opportunity of lodging two "grouses" both of which are accompanied by a good deal of popular support in the country. First, I would mention the pensions to disabled ex-Service men. I am not going through all the old familiar arguments of wages having gone up 150 per cent. and the £only being worth 12s., or whatever different people like to make it worth today, and the fact that the increase in pensions has been very small indeed, but I want to say a word or two on the human side of this subject because during the Recess I have been in very close touch with various branches of the British Legion in my constituency. Those branches are composed of all kinds of political parties, but one and all have passed resolutions unanimously condemning the fact that the basic rate of pension is scarcely enough to live upon.

What strikes me as being the most evil Dart of this basic rate is in relation to those who are totally disabled and unable to work. They get their 45s. Some, out by no means all, may get another 10s. for an attendant's allowance and they may get another 30s. because they are unable to be employed. Those men, disheartened at not being able to work, have to scrape along as best they can. I have also been in touch with a constituent of mine who is the widow of a man killed in the last war. She gets 46s. a week, and after she has paid her rent, rates, coal, electric light and gas, that lady is left with 15s. a week to live upon. Hon. Members on all sides will wonder how she has managed to live on 15s. a week. She has done it, but now on top of that she has been called upon to pay 3s. 8d. a week for National Health Insurance.

That is a case for either raising the exemption limit for the payment of National Health Insurance or giving higher basic pensions.

I have pledged myself to my constituents to put their case forward. Most of the arguments are already familiar to hon. Members, but I would remind hon. Members once more that we do not want to treat these people as a charity. It is only common decency to look after them. Look at it on a business footing. There may be—though I hardly dare think of it—another war. Shall we get those men coming forward again in the same great numbers and with the same heroic spirit as they have done before if they know that should they be disabled they may have to live on a mere pittance. I appeal to the Government to appoint a Select Committee to go very carefully into this question of basic rates of pension.

My other "grouse" is about farm workers and their rations. Everyone agrees that during the war the farm worker did a magnificent job. He has done a heroic job. He carried on all through those dreary war years without a complaint of any sort. He has always been there to work overtime, in spite of the higher rate of taxation, whenever he has been called upon to do it. He has never let up. He has worked steadily on and has never been absent from his job. We are indeed grateful to the agricultural labourer for all he has done for the country. But now he is facing what I would describe as a real hardship. I do not know whether it is universal—I can only speak for my own Division—but I think many hon. Members, speaking for their Divisions as the hon. Member for Canterbury did, will say that throughout the country there is a great shortage of food to be exchanged for points.

There is nothing more disappointing than for a man to be given points and then to find that they are not honoured. He becomes dejected and begins to lose faith in the country. It is vital to get food—more vital than anything else—but we cannot get food unless we feed the man who produces the food. It is no use asking a horse to work without his oats. Yet we are asking the agricultural worker to work without sufficient tinned meat to put in his sandwiches. The Government made the same mistake over feedingstuffs for animals. Because they would not produce that small amount of extra feedingstuffs which we wanted, we had to go without eggs and bacon. It is an uneconomic policy and it is wrong. The Government may say that we cannot afford more food because it costs dollars, but if they said that we could not afford raw materials, what would our industries do? It is a completely unsound policy. At the moment the agricultural labourer gets 12 points a month. I have had many letters about the disappointment of not being able to get those goods, and I am not the only one. My local paper wrote as follows only this last week: "Farmers are bringing us permits for 1,000 and more points for their workers' additional rations," a Brenchley grocer told a reporter. We simply have not the goods to cover them' he added." And I quote from a letter I have had in which a lady said: "Why do the Government let our lads down now? I, as a mother, just don't know what to put in the sandwiches." All these words are true, and I believe that hon. Members on the other side realise the position, and the Government ought to have realised the position some months ago. They did not anticipate that if the agricultural labourers wanted more, some of the other customers would have to go short, so some of the other customers are suffering as well as the agricultural labourers. It is no use the Minister telling us, if he has the courtesy to reply to my request, that there is ample cheese to be bought in the London shops. That is no good to the farm worker of the Tonbridge Division, nor is it any good to tell them that they can buy Danish sausages at 8s. 1½d. for a 1 lb. tin costing six points. That is not what they want. They want tinned meat and tinned fish. In the winter they may be able to get home and have a hot meal, but now they want to save time and be on the land all day, and they have to eat sandwiches, and they have nothing to put in those sandwiches. The situation is known very well to the Government, and the Government know very well that without food this country will not go very far. It is to help themselves that I am appealing to the Government tonight and I hope, at the same time, they will help the agricultural worker.

8.52 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Walter Smiles (Down) I would first like to support what my hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge (Mr. G. Williams) has just said about the pensions for disabled ex-Service men and women. During the Recess I was approached by some 20 branches of the British Legion in my constituency, and I gave a definite pledge that I would support these disabled ex-Service men and women in asking for an increase in their pensions. The arguments, of course, are well known, but I hope that whatever Government is in power this will not be looked upon as a party matter, because it affects every party in this House.

Indeed, my feeling today in this Debate is that it is not a party matter either. It has been said that England's danger is Ireland's opportunity. There is no doubt that England is in danger at this moment, and our part of Northern Ireland look upon it as an opportunity to do what we can to help England and the British Commonwealth in their dangerous position today. If war does come I know that we will spring to her side the very second war is declared, and fight and work and, if necessary, die, by her side. That is the feeling I have tonight. I do not feel like criticising the Government, because the dangerous position we are in with regard to Germany is not, I believe, due to the fault of this Government.

I will start by speaking about Malaya. I have a definite interest in and sympathy with the people in Malaya for a personal reason. I was a planter for some 26 years. When I hear the planters in Malaya being run down, I think of the sort of life led by those first people who went to these countries overseas. Planters were sent out into the jungle on an elephant with a couple of bags of tea seed to open a plantation, not more than 50 per cent. of them came back. Of course, nothing was known about malaria then, or about the mosquito and they just died, but they turned what the history books then said was nothing but swamp, and fit only for snakes and tigers, into a very prosperous part of what was once the British Empire. It has produced a tremendous amount of employment as well as dollars right through the British Empire. I am talking, of course, about the tea plantations. When I think about Malaya, a place which was developed much later but more quickly and better, I can remember Sir Malcolm Watson, the great malaria expert, coming up to us in Assam from Malaya and lecturing about how much we were behind the people in Malaya in what we did for our labour forces in the way of malaria prevention and hospital conditions generally.

It makes me sad to think that these lonely planters are in this position today. I know what it feels like, though I was never in a particularly lonely or particularly dangerous place. I remember the troubles all over India in 1920. We knew then that we had law and order behind us and that the British Parliament here were looking after us. We had confidence in Westminster and what they would do for us. I can remember a battalion of Gurkha military police marching through Assam after those troubles but, by and large the disorders were kept down by the police alone and by the tact and knowledge of the Indian Civil Service. I have never heard that the Colonial Civil Service or the police in Malaya are one whit worse than the police in India, and it seems to me there must have been a blunder somewhere. Someone has not listened to the advice which was given.

Even in my indirect associations with the planting industry in Malaya I received warnings more than one year ago that all was not well. It does not necessarily follow that because the Colonial Secretary is not making any public statements that he is not prepared. All the time in India we knew that the Government in Delhi or in Ceylon were prepared for these eventualities. I was an honorary magistrate and I used to get secret documents informing me of what was going on and asking me for my information. Naturally, I expected the same conditions to exist in Malaya, and I was surprised and disappointed that the present situation has arisen. I think it is deplorable that we should have to send the Brigade of Guards out there, and that there are not some other troops nearer to take their place. It seems to me to be a very desperate situation when the Brigade of Guards has to be sent away from Britain at this time. When we hear of arms having to be shipped from Australia, and of the shortage of machine guns, etc., it is certain to me that someone has blundered.

I would like now to refer to the speech made by an hon. and gallant Member for a Scottish constituency about Hyderabad. With the party opposite, I must stand up and take my share of the blame for Hyderabad, because, after all,

I did vote with the party opposite for giving self-government to India. I can only say at this moment how sad I feel that such a thing has happened in Hyderabad. We all know that the population of Hyderabad is predominantly Hindu, although ruled over by a Muslim, but we thought that if a plebiscite were taken it would go into India. Unless some of the Muslims are armed and are creating trouble by killing Hindus—and I have not heard that this is so—why is it necessary for India to take this drastic action today? The Geological Society visited Belfast a fortnight ago and among their number were some members from Pakistan and others from India. Naturally, as I was more or less in the position of host, I did my best to talk to these gentlemen about the situation in Hyderabad and Kashmir. I was surprised to hear from both these parties separately—of course, they were not politicians, which makes a difference—that it was a pity that the British army could not go out to Kashmir and Hyderabad to hold the ring properly until a plebiscite was held.

Next, I turn to the situation in Europe today. My experience of the European situation dates from 1917, when I saw the beginning of the Russian revolution. I saw Russian officers whose heads had been battered, not necessarily by their own men, but by Russian troops. I saw the beginning of the Russian revolution, and when I was in Rumania about 15 months ago I saw the continuation of that revolution. I am a very definite enemy of all forms of Communism, and I will oppose Communism in every way I can. Probably the Opposition Front Bench, and certainly the Government Front Bench, could not use those words as definitely as I can, because they are in a very different position from that of a back bencher.

I read in the papers last week about German police having been in the City Hall in Berlin and having been given a safe conduct to reach the American zone. The Russian officer who gave the safe conduct proved that his word was not as good as his bond, because these policemen who were given the safe conduct were taken from the lorries and, as far as I know, they have disappeared, like millions of others, into Russia. I can remember the Socialist Kerensky going to speak to the troops on the Russian front; I think it was in July, 1917, when the Russian army was making an advance near Tarnopol close to Poland. I remember how his wonderful eloquence swayed the soldiers and how they cheered him to the echo; but eloquence alone was not enough, because one week later the Russian army was again in full retreat. Of course, Lenin never spoke a truer word than when he said that Russia never made peace with the Germans, but that it was the soldiers themselves who made the peace when they ran away from the front and would fight no more.

So far as I am concerned, firmness is the only possible course, and I would repeat what my late leader, Lord Craigavon, said about our own boundary—Northern Ireland—"Not an inch." I believe in "not an inch" in Berlin either, for every inch that we go back, will be taken as a sign of weakness and will be so regarded all over Europe and the world. It is evident that Russia is backing Italy now and perhaps Italy may swing to the Left, but probably, as cleverer men than I have said, the whole situation depends on France, and the French constitution is a very bad one. We have a good constitution here as when the Government are defeated Parliament is dissolved and every one of us has to go out and fight for his seat. That has a chastening and sobering influence on Government supporters before they go into the Lobbies against their Government. It would be very much better if such were the case in France. It is said that people come to London to see the changing of the Guard, but go to Paris to see the changing of the Government. I do not wish to attack the Government over foreign affairs; I feel inclined to support them and hope they will have the strength to pull the country through the difficult situation in which it is.

*9.6 p.m.*

Mr. Dye (Norfolk, South Western). It was not my intention to take part in the Debate today, but, having listened to two hon. Members opposite speaking of the conditions of British agriculture with special reference to the rations of farm workers, I feel it my duty as one who during the whole of the period when the House was not sitting was engaged in harvest work, to say something on the matter.

Without a doubt, if one takes the Eastern half of England, more than twice the size of harvest has been gathered in as compared with last year. It has been a very big task and one made particularly difficult because of adverse weather conditions. It would, therefore, be a surprise if under such conditions there were no grumbles from those who have taken part in this great task and, bearing in mind that there has been a change in the food supply situation in so far as we have been purchasing less tinned food from America, there were obviously smaller supplies in the shops. Those farmers who took advantage of those arrangements to secure extra rations for their workers at the beginning of the harvest were able to get the extra rations for their men. The grumbles arose from those who, after the harvest had been well under way, suddenly awoke to the fact that someone ought to have some extra rations and then began to get necessary permits and, after dilly-dallying about for some time, made application to shopkeepers to honour those extra permits. From my division, which is one of the largest agricultural divisions in the Eastern counties, I have only had one letter of complaint about short rations. That arrived today—the first from the whole of my division to complain that they had not been able to get extra rations.

The supply of extra rations is not merely the task of the Ministry of Food; all those involved must co-operate in the extra feeding necessary for the men in the harvest field. If the farmers cooperate with the Ministry of Food and if local authorities undertake their responsibilities in this respect, there is no reason why the whole of the people should not be well fed in rural Britain. Besides being a Member of this House, I am still a member of my district council and we supply all the villages with extra food all the year round either through the meat pie schemes or the British Restaurants. If other district councils had shouldered their responsibilities in the same way, extra meat, fats and sugar could be made available to the farm workers all the year round and there need be no shortage of food. That has been carried out in some districts and if other district councils will shoulder their responsibilities in the same way, there need be no grumbling in this respect.

Last Saturday I met a farmer friend of mine in Norwich. He told me that in order to help his men through the harvest he had asked the Ministry of Food for permission to slaughter a calf and have it made into pies to supply his men with extra food. That permission was forthcoming and his men had the veal pies in addition to their ordinary rations during the period of their harvest work in the fields. I have also been informed that any farmer can get permission to have a sheep slaughtered and so enable his workers to be better fed during the period of the harvest or at any other time of the year. If, then, all farmers would take an interest in the welfare of their men, as the best farmers do, there would be much less grumbling.

It has been one of the features of British agriculture that many farmers have only taken an interest in their men to the extent of the amount of work that they can get out of them. It is time that they took an interest in their men not only in respect of the amount of their work but in respect of their general welfare. That is the headway which we want the more backward farmers of this country to make—to take an interest in the welfare of their people in their feeding and their housing as well as in every other aspect that will make for a healthy, happy and flourishing community in rural England. The farming class as a community are today enjoying more prosperity than they ever did previously in peace-time in this country. Let them share that prosperity with those who do the work on the farms and not wake up after the men come forward with their complaints.

If there is wholehearted co-operation between the representatives of the farmers and the workers, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food there is not a problem which we cannot solve in relation to the right feeding of our people, and nothing would add more to the good feeling that exists in rural Britain today. The trouble of many of our farmers when we talk to them today is to try to think of an answer to the question as to why they are still supporting the Conservative Party because we now have a policy that has ensured for British agriculture a real chance to provide a greater proportion of the food that this country needs and have our people well paid, healthy and happy. If we can continue in the right spirit which exists among the best farmers in the country as well as among the best workers, I am sure that rural Britain will never be happier than it is and can be these days under the present policy.

9.19 p.m.

Sir William Darling (Edinburgh, South) Like the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk (Mr. Dye), I have been spending the Recess farming, and I hardly think it worth while interrupting my labours on the belated and flooded crops of South-East Scotland to come and attend this Session. It seems to me that the pretext under which he and I have been brought here is very unsubstantial and insufficient. We might have been much better employed, and I am sure that the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk will agree that even his speech and mine will not make up for an hour or two's labour on the harvest field.

In this Debate I quite well understand the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk speaking as he has done, because I consulted an important book of reference and observed that he holds his seat by the precarious majority of something under 100. I understand his insistence that the policy which the Government support for agriculture should be widely diffused as a Socialist policy and not as a Conservative policy. I understand the sentiment when he talks to the farmers of Norwich and elsewhere about the desirability of slaughtering cattle to provide food for one's own employees—which, I think, is illegal; it is certainly illegal in Scotland. He raises a most interesting topic which I hope the Secretary of State for Scotland, whom I am glad to see here, will have in mind—this picture of cattle reiving which is a long abandoned habit on the Borders of Scotland.

The hon. Member for South-West Norfolk says that in his area they slaughter cattle and sell the meat as veal in pies. I think that was his explanation. "Veal" was the word he used. I noted it. They slaughter their cattle and sell the meat as veal in pies. Apparently they extend these illegal operations in other directions. I would tell the Secretary of State for Scotland—

Mr. Dye I am sure the hon. Member does not desire to misquote me. I did not say they sold the pies. They give them to the men on the farms. I am not in any way whatever supporting black-marketing.

Sir W. Darling The hon. Member makes the situation worse, at least for himself. I direct his attention to a statement by his right hon. Friend the Minister of Food—and the hon. Lady, the Parliamentary Secretary supports him—that it is an offence to make gifts of rationed goods. This is a gift of slaughtered cattle as meat called "veal," in the form of pies; it is a gift, according to the Minister of Food. He can check up the facts, because if not I shall compound a felony by following him, if I am permitted to do so.

Mr. Dye I stated that the farmer in question first of all asked and obtained the permission of the Ministry of Food to do what he did.

Sir W. Darling I hope the hon. Member for South-West Norfolk, with his rather diffident majority is satisfied that such efforts as he is making will have their reward in due course. Having parted company from him in the agricultural field, I will turn to the subject I wanted to raise.

The hon. Member for Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) indicted the Government as having committed six or seven villainies. I think it was that number. He talked about six or seven villainies they had committed and I noticed that no other supporter on his side of the House admitted that they had committed any. I am anxious to follow him, and the villainy I think the Government have committed is a very real one. One of the misfortunes of these recent days is the lack of support the Minister of Supply gives to the salvage campaign. I supported the campaign during the war and I have not lost interest in it now. I still follow it. The other day I turned out some surplus books and paper and among them was an old atlas. I turned pathetically to the map of the world on Mercator's projection and I saw what had happened during the last three years to that map of the world under His Majesty's Socialist Government. I noted that what had been Burma and had been one of the proud Dominions of the Crown was no longer a proud Dominion of the Crown. I noted that under the auspices of the Government some changes had taken place in what was the sub-continent of

India, and that there was now India and Pakistan. I noted that Palestine where we had, with the foundation of our trade, some considerable influence, had passed from our jurisdiction. I noted that Egypt, on this map which is to go to salvage, had lost its place in the British association. These are the achievements of the last three years. No Government in so short a time has made such remarkable changes. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] That may be a matter of pride for right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite, but it was not a matter of pride to an ageing man, as I cast away this atlas to the salvage.

I think that the principal thing that has happened is a diminution in the pride that people once had in being Britons. There has been no accession of pride. We have cast away what was—it may or may not have been ill-gotten—a rich inheritance, full of great opportunities, and those opportunities for good or ill have been cast entirely away from our reach. If we had remained in India, we might have done better than we did. If we had remained in Egypt, we might have done something for the people there; and if we had remained in Palestine we might have done something for the people of that unhappy land. Now we stand stripped naked with three years' sacrifices behind us under Socialist administration. I can quite understand that there are not many rising to their feet to praise and to add their token of delight and encouragement to His Majesty's Government.

I cannot understand, for example, our foreign policy. I remember the days—and I come from the South-East of Scotland—when we had frequent, easy and regular associations with the people of Russia. During the war, I entertained scores and hundreds of Russians. I found them quite ordinary human beings. They had noses, mouths and voices, throats and palates, and they could consume the liquor of my country as easily as that of their own. I found no difficulty in getting on with the Russians, and I was President of an Anglo-Soviet Society. I cannot understand why His Majesty's Government cannot get on with the Russians. When we went to Russia with capitalism in our hearts and the slogan of the profit motive on our hatbands, we could talk with the Russians. A company with which I am connected electrified in a practical and technical sense the streets of Moscow. There were hundreds of businesses in Scotland associated closely with Russia. When we go with Socialism in our hearts and no profit incentive in our minds, we cannot talk with Russia. What has happened that we cannot find anyone to talk to the 280 million people of Russia, except the hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallacher)? How is it that we cannot find someone to do something in that direction?

I believe that the British people, who taught liberty to the people of India and the language of Shakespeare and the policies of Edmund Burke, and who Christianised Africa—that out of all the hundreds of thousands of people of Britain we can find someone who can talk to the millions of the U.S.S.R. I do not share the opinion that the Russian problem is insoluble. I notice the weakheartedness that has afflicted the once ardent followers of His Majesty's Government, but I believe that we can come to an understanding with these people, and that if we have not able men among the ranks of the Socialists who can do this, they can be found elsewhere, among the bagmen, commercial men, engineers and technologists. They have never had any difficulty in crossing any frontier. There is an indication that the Government have failed to establish human relations with people who like me and you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, have mouths, eyes, heads, bellies and all the rest.

That is an indictment of His Majesty's Government. Once the British people were a proud people and welcomed in every country where they traveled. Under His Majesty's Government, during the past three years, there is hardly a country to which we can go where we are loved, esteemed, admired or respected. It is surely an indictment of His Majesty's Government that in three years our people have fallen from the very pinnacle of human greatness, admired and respected wherever our name was known, to a lower level than we have ever known in our history.

If His Majesty's Government have disappointed those who look for something of their achievements in foreign fields, they have also disappointed those who work on the home front. At home I find there is little satisfaction with, little comfort from and little appreciation of His Majesty's Government's services there. I find that the men and women with



whom I work—and I am connected with a range of industries from banking and engineering to selling frocks—are disappointed; at the election many of them voted for His Majesty's Government, but they are disappointed with the achievements of the last three years. They are not satisfied with what the Government offers them; they believe that these are not able men; they remember the colour of their promises, the fascinating character of their speeches, the elaborate character of their pretensions and the fact that they painted the picture of a Utopia; but they believe that these have not been fulfilled, even to the slightest degree, and they are greatly disappointed. I am inclined to think that there are other hon. Members than the hon. Member for South-Western Norfolk who are afraid of what will happen at the next election; there is a very large number of gentlemen in a not dissimilar position.

Why are these people dissatisfied? The Government have filled the pockets of the people with paper money which purchases less; they have disappointed the people, who cannot get the standard of living to which they felt they were entitled. By and large, these men and women believe that money—which I believe, in the economy I support, is the best and wisest measure of human achievement—is worth very little to them, and His Majesty's Government have taught them that £5, £8, or £10 a week means nothing, which is a disservice in any economy. I make to the Government a suggestion which they might take to heart to their advantage. I suggest they should practise public economy; that they should rigorously seek to control the multitudinous and multifarious extravagances which everywhere rot our social system; they should curtail taxation which is of a punitive and destructive character; they should let those who earn feel that they have something worth earning; and they should throw aside, now and for ever, the false story they told of the exploitation by the capitalist, and the false story they told that this was a disunited country to which only the class war would bring prosperity. Until the Government abandon these fantastic theories and return to the sober truths of common sense there will be little hope for this country—and, indeed, little hope for them to secure a repetition of the encouragement they got at the last election.

There are other simple things, which are very much in my mind because they were represented to me before I came to the House this week, such as the abolition or curtailment of P.A.Y.E., which is, I believe, an urgently necessary matter. To impose upon the individual employer the responsibility of acting as unpaid tax collector for the country should be done away with. The business of collecting taxes is that of the Government, and it should not be that of myself or any other employer. Taxation of overtime should at once be removed, and an incentive given to encourage the maximum production. The encouragement of savings should be placed honestly and fairly in the forefront of the Government's programme, and they should be prepared to pay 5 per cent. on the first £1,000 saved by any man, woman or child.

*Mr. Stokes* The hon. Member says that taxation of overtime should be done away with. Surely he, as an industrialist, will agree that what would then happen would be that everybody would work overtime?

*Sir W. Darling* Would it be disadvantageous if everybody worked overtime?

*Mr. Stokes* Perhaps the hon. Member misunderstands me, but I think he knows perfectly well what I am getting at. They would take time off in the middle of the day.

*Sir W. Darling* The hon. Member speaks with frankness and honesty, which does him great credit. True, the five-day week was put forward as an improvement in working class conditions, but it was really in order that overtime might start after five days instead of five and a half days. The hon. Member and I know that in our experience. If financial encouragement, free from taxation, were given for additional effort, that additional effort would, in my judgment, be readily forthcoming. It is in such directions that His Majesty's Government should apply themselves, and offer incentives to savings. It is a paltry offer to give a 2½ per cent. reward for the abstention from spending £100.

The sum of £1,000, which I mention merely as a token amount, might well be the basis for everyone in this country to save, drawing 5 per cent. Some inducements like this, and I could spend an hour outlining others, would go far to restore the confidence that many millions of people put in the possibilities of a Socialist Government, which has now

been dissipated. The Government are no longer looked upon in that aura of splendour, but appear to be a shabby, ordinary body of men who have failed. This disappointment has deeply bitten into the hearts and minds of the electors. If for the better part of the year remaining to the Government they will do something to raise the prestige of the British people once again in the world, and if they will offer inducements to men and women willing to work and every encouragement for those willing to save, and if they will abandon the fantastic and foolish promises made three years ago, they may well contemplate a further period of the electors' confidence. But if they do not take my advice I despair of them, and their place will need to be taken by better men.

9.32 p.m.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Dalton) Whatever may be thought of the substance of the speech of the hon. Member for South Edinburgh (Sir W. Darling), no Member can withhold admiration for his eloquence and histrionic gifts, which are indeed remarkable. I understand that, but for a mischance many years ago they might have been used in connection with quite another movement—we feel a deep sense of historical regret and deprivation.

We have had a very short King's Speech, but that has not prevented a considerable and widely-ranging Debate which is intended to continue for two more days before, as I understand the Vote is to be taken on an Opposition Amendment. This Session, although called for the specific and primary purpose of dealing with the Parliament Bill, is a bonus Session from the point of view of the Opposition.

Mr. W. Fletcher Bogus Session?

Mr. Dalton Bonus Session—a gift, because it is giving them opportunities which they otherwise would not have had for a debate on a very wide range of topics—foreign affairs, internal affairs—

Mr. Stokes Taxation on overtime.

Mr. Dalton Taxation on overtime, which is an old topic, and many other subjects. The Government have provided all this for the Opposition, unasked for. The Opposition have not demanded that this Session should be held and Parliament summoned back. But Parliament having been summoned back, the Opposition have unexpected opportunities of which no doubt they will make full use. Many Members have had to hurry back for this Session from various parts of the world. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House was chided, or at any rate it was thought to be not unamusing, for having to hasten back from France—

Mr. Douglas Marshall (Bodmin) With his clothes on?

Mr. Dalton —after having had a little bathing and after having been photographed by the Press in this country lightly clad while proceeding towards the waves. But I hold in my hand the photograph of another, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. This was published in the American journal "Time," of 14th September and the picture shows the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Woodford (Mr. Churchill) seated upon a mule. He was bare headed, with a wide open shirt, no tie, and a cigar in his mouth, the mule being propelled by several young people presumably French. The letterpress in "Time" says under the heading "Trials and Tribulations": "At Fontaine de Vaucluse, France, sportsman Winston Churchill submitted with what appeared to be his less than usual zest, to a friendly gesture by enthusiastic townspeople. Escorted triumphantly home from a day's painting astride an unimpressed donkey, he looked not unlike a latter-day, sober and cheroot clamping Silenus." We were told yesterday that the right hon. Gentleman had also arrived in London after these adventures.

This Session has interrupted many vacations, but we are glad that the House has reassembled and that we have these opportunities for discussion. The Foreign Secretary spoke this afternoon about some aspects of external affairs and, as the House knows, hopes to supplement what he said today next week. I will touch upon one or two points which have

been raised in the external field but here, as in other matters—of detail but, nevertheless, important—touching the work of a great number of Departmental Ministers it will not be expected that I should cover them all. My right hon. Friend will supplement next week what he said today, and a discussion on defence will also take place next week.

I understand that this week there will be further opportunities for the House to hear statements by Ministers on our internal economic affairs, balance of payments and kindred subjects. I have reason to think that the House will not be dissatisfied with the White Paper which is to be published this week, giving particulars of the production drive and our export drive during the first part of this year. I will not forestall that Paper but I think it will be found to be encouraging, although it is admitted by all that we have a long distance to travel. The White Paper will show the way in which our people have responded to the appeals made to them for additional effort, both in the general field of production and with particular reference to the export drive.

I would also emphasise, as the Foreign Secretary said, that great credit is due to our own representatives, as well as to those of other nations in Europe, for the recent success of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, both in apportioning American aid to Europe and also in determining the amount of British aid to the Continent. In peace as in war, so far as the weaker States in Western Europe are concerned, we are carrying a great part of their burden on our shoulders. Of this we are entitled to be proud, in addition to the pride we can take in the technical success of the discussions recently concluded in Paris.

I was asked by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Montgomery (Mr. C. Davies) to say a word about Palestine. As the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows, this matter has been referred by the United Nations to the Mediator, Count Bernadotte, and he has been labouring most earnestly to find a solution. The United Nations will deal with this matter on the Mediator's report, which will be received during the Assembly of the United Nations which is beginning next week and will continue for some little while. We cannot say at what point of the programme it will be considered, but it will be considered in the course of the next week or two. His Majesty's Government give full support to the efforts of the Mediator and to the truce. We hope that this truce will not be broken by either side, and we shall continue to strive most earnestly for a peaceful settlement in Palestine. Whatever views we may have taken in the past in regard to this incident or that—and on the history views may vary—Members in all parts of the House, I am sure, will deep in their hearts be unanimous that we should strain every nerve and explore every alternative approach to make an end of the bitterness and bloodshed in the Holy Land. At this stage it would be wrong, and it might be rash, if I were to say any more than that.

Many hon. Members have referred to Malaya and Hyderabad. With regard to Malaya, I regret that I did not hear the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury (Mr. W. Fletcher), but he spoke to me in another part of the building and I am broadly aware of what he said. He raised some obviously important points touching upon the financial liabilities of the planters and others whose property and person may suffer. I would say to the hon. Gentleman and any other hon. Member who has touched upon such points that the Colonial Secretary will carefully study what has been said. They have only been raised tonight and he must have time to consider them.

*Mr. W. Fletcher* These points were raised before, and we do not want another period of Government crystal gazing and looking into things. We want action in the next 48 hours.

*Mr. Dalton* I will give an undertaking on behalf of my right hon. Friend that the hon. Member's speech shall be carefully studied. That is all I can promise tonight, and, if it is not good enough, hon. Members opposite will have to wait for something better later on. With regard to Hyderabad, I must say that I was shocked at the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Perth (Colonel Gomme-Duncan), and I deplore very deeply what he said about Lord Mountbatten.

*Mr. Pickthornrose*—

Mr. Dalton I am not going to give way, for I am speaking now on the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for Perth.

Mr. Pickthorn Give me one half-minute.

Mr. Dalton I would rather finish what I was saying about the hon. and gallant Member's speech. What I was saying was that I was very sorry that he made such a strong attack in terms which I thought were not quite worthy of the great services which Lord Mountbatten—on the hon. and gallant Member's own admission—has rendered, and I am not sure that the hon. and gallant Member, when he reads his speech tomorrow in HANSARD, will not be sorry that he went as far as he did. On the subject of Hyderabad. I have nothing to add to the statement which was made by the Foreign Secretary this afternoon—that this matter is now before the Security Council, which is where the Hyderabad representative wished it to be taken. The British representative will be in the chair at the meeting of the Security Council, and it would be quite wrong at this stage for me to add to what had been said by the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Pickthorn—

Mr. Dalton The hon. Gentleman is very excited and I will give way now.

Mr. Pickthorn I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he has said all he is going to say about Malaya.

Mr. Dalton Yes, Sir. A note was furnished to me of the hon. Member's remarks about Malaya and it does not encourage me to make any comment on what he said. The note furnished to me of the hon. Member's speech said that it was exceedingly abusive—

Mr. Pickthorn And it was all true.

Mr. Dalton —and in many respects nonsensical.

I am going for a moment to turn back to the King's Speech from which this Debate originates and which provides that a small and simple Bill shall, for the second time, be passed through this House.

Mr. Eden I would just put a question to the Leader of the House. Does he know that we have had not one speech but at least half a dozen speeches raising all sorts of points about Malaya? I had hoped that the Colonial Secretary was going to reply, but if for any good reason he is not able to do so, can we be assured that before the House rises we shall have an answer to those questions about a most vital part of the British Empire?

Mr. H. Morrison There can be no reason given at all about the Colonial Secretary's not replying to the Debate. Obviously arrangements have to be made in advance. We had no notice that Malaya was to be the main subject of the Debate. Indeed, there have been many subjects debated, and it was right that the Chancellor of the Duchy should reply. I will convey to my right hon. Friend the request made by the right hon. Gentleman. I cannot give any undertaking but I will see that the request is considered.

Mr. Dalton I was recalling to the House that the King's Speech provides for one, and only one, short and simple Measure. I am not tonight going to redebate the merits of it. That will come next week. References have been made by the right hon. Member for Warwick and Leamington (Mr. Eden) and others to the question of iron and steel. Many other hon. Members touched upon it, including the hon. Member who used to be, but is no longer, a member of the Labour Party, the hon. Member for East Middlesbrough (Mr. A. Edwards). Had he been here I should have had a number of observations to make. But he is not here. I will say a word about iron and steel in general.

In regard to the speech by the hon. Member for East Middlesbrough I will merely say that he deceives himself in believing that he has ceased to be a member of the Labour Party solely by reason of his attitude on iron and steel. He has ceased to be a member of the Labour Party—and this should be known—because over a long period, both in

speech and in writings largely in the Beaverbrook Press, his favourite mode of written expression—he has expressed a variety of opinions which, in our view and in the unanimous view of the conference of the Labour Party were quite inappropriate to a Labour Member of Parliament. In particular, he expressed the opinion, in writing, that all strikes should be declared to be illegal, that trade union funds should again be made subject to damages by employers in respect of strikes, and, finally, he proposed to confiscate in time of strike the strikers' ration books.

Those propositions may, of course, be advanced in a land where freedom of speech and freedom of the Press are valued, but they are quite inappropriate to a member of the Labour Party. We always thought that sooner or later the hon. Member might find his way to a Tory platform. Therefore, we are not totally surprised that he appears to have made his maiden effort on a Conservative platform in the constituency of Orpington a few days ago. So much for that. If the hon. Member had been here I might have said more, but not in his absence.

Iron and steel may be the subject of debate later this year. I cannot tell, for it would be wrong for me to seek to foreshadow what may be in the next King's Speech. However, whether or not the nationalisation of iron and steel is in the next King's Speech, it is in the Labour Party's programme. The hon. Member for East Middlesbrough gave a most imaginative essay on what happens inside the Cabinet. I would merely say that what he says bears no close relation to any facts known to me, but this proposal that iron and steel should be nationalised is, of course, part of the electoral mandate which this party got at the last Election—on just the same footing in terms of validity as the nationalisation of coal or the Bank of England.

The Prime Minister has given a pledge that this legislation will be carried within the lifetime of this Parliament. That is all I say on that side of it, but we have had very clear warnings from the Opposition more than once that they will use all the constitutional measures open to them to prevent such a Measure passing into law. Those words were actually used by the Leader of the Opposition in a speech about a month ago of which I took a note at the time. He said: "If such a Bill should be introduced, we"—that is, the Opposition—"shall resist its passage into law by every constitutional means."—including of course according to these words, the use of the veto of the House of Lords. Therefore, although this Measure which we are going to pass in this short Session will not have specific reference to this particular Bill, if it should hereafter be introduced, it will of course pick it up in its passage like any other Bill which the House of Lords might throw out. They might be minded to throw out more than that Bill. They might not like a Bill for establishing national parks and restricting the rights of large landowners to keep the public off the grouse moors. Therefore, this Parliament Bill must not be thought, of as a single-purpose Bill. It is a democratic advance. My hon. Friend the Member for Sedgefield (Mr. Leslie), on the opening day of our discussions, when he was moving the Motion for the Address, said, very truly, that this was a very modest and long overdue democratic advance. We are entitled, we say, by this Bill to take precautions on behalf of all our legislative programme, not for one Measure only but for all of it, and to make sure that this fourth Session of Parliament is not rendered futile by the action of a non-elected Chamber.

I said a few moments ago, and I would like to recall it, that this short Session does give us—for we value the opportunities for these discussions—an opportunity of reviewing and discussing—although it is called only for this single minimum Measure of necessary legislative business—a wide range of other matters. Therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman who opened for the Opposition said that nothing could be more out of place than this Session, I am sure he was wrong. I think rather that he and his colleagues should be grateful to the Government for having arranged on our own initiative, without being pressed by the Opposition, for this short Session in which, in addition to the Parliament Bill, the Opposition will be able to range far and wide, inspired by the lead of the hon. Member for South Edinburgh, who spoke just before me, over the whole field of external and internal affairs and discuss all aspects of the economic and financial state of the nation. Nothing could be more out of place than the Amendment which it is proposed to move tomorrow and nothing could be more astonishing than the ingratitude of the Opposition for the blessings showered on them by His Majesty's present Government.

Debate adjourned.—[Mr. Snow.]

Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.